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ABSTRACT

Community foundations can be effective vehicles for channeling support to low income neighborhood organizations. This document comprises a guide for community foundations to help them develop their grantmaking and programming skills and to connect with other elements of community leadership. Chapter 1, "Why Support Low Income Neighborhood Organizations?" introduces the reader to neighborhood organizations and presents rationales for community foundation support of low income neighborhood organizations. Chapter 2, "Structuring the Program," gives guidance in developing a grantmaking program for neighborhood organizations. Chapter 3, "Helping Neighborhood Organizations Become Effective," describes what community foundations can do beyond grantmaking to help neighborhood organizations become effective. Chapter 4, "Expanding the Community Foundation's Capacities," presents features of a neighborhood grant program that will expand a community foundation's own capabilities, as well as increase support from within the community for low income self-help activity. Chapter 5, "Neighborhood Projects on a Shoestring," describes the range of neighborhood projects supported by community foundations in the Community Foundations and Neighborhoods Small Grants Program in detail, and presents hallmarks of successful projects. Chapter 6, "Assessing the Effectiveness of a Neighborhoods Program," is a checklist that can be used by community foundations and neighborhood groups in planning, evaluating, and training. The appendices comprise a list of neighborhood grants programs in eight community foundations and a partial list of institutions supportive of low income neighborhood-based organizations. (FMW)

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A Guide for Community Foundations

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Supporting Low Income Neighborhood Organizations

A Guide for Community Foundations

By
Steven E. Mayer
David M. Scheie

Rainbow Research, Inc.
Minneapolis, Minnesota ◆ 1989

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Preface

In 1984, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation launched its Community Foundations and Neighborhoods Small Grants Program, initially a three-year pilot program which combined the Foundation's long-term interests in supporting community foundations and strengthening neighborhoods. As a result of the program's success, the Mott Foundation extended the pilot phase an additional two years. The program encouraged community foundations to take a focused approach in supporting low income neighborhoods with minigrants financed by a combination of Mott and community foundation funds.

This book is based on the experience of that program from 1984 to 1989.

As described in their 1985 Special Report, "Community Foundations: A Growing Force in Philanthropy," the Mott Foundation's program of strengthening neighborhoods began in the 1970s. Through years of experience in making grants to neighborhood-based organizations, the Foundation learned that small self-help groups often can make significant improvements in the quality of neighborhood life. Although citizen groups exist in many neighborhoods, those in low income areas often lack the finances and skills to support and sustain those improvements.

Community foundations, with their financial resources and extensive knowledge of the community, seemed a promising source of support for low income neighborhood organizations and an attractive vehicle for the Mott Foundation to assist more such groups nationwide. Thus began the Community Foundations and Neighborhoods Small Grants Program.

The program was an experiment to discover (a) whether community foundations could be effective vehicles for channeling support to low income neighborhood organizations; and (b) what elements made for an effective neighborhoods grant program at a community foundation. The program's guidelines are presented in detail in Appendix A.

Within the Mott guidelines, the eight participating community foundations were encouraged to craft their own grantmaking practices and to experiment with different ways of providing technical assistance to neighborhood groups. The community foundations also explored different ways of building a local base of financial, technical, moral and political support for their neighborhoods programs.

In an unusual move, the Mott Foundation also took steps to link participating community foundations in a national network that uses a common evaluation plan, technical assistance, periodic meetings on neighborhood issues, and a newsletter.

Rainbow Research, Inc., a Minneapolis-based nonprofit organization that provides evaluation services designed to improve organizational capabilities and program effectiveness, was supported in a grant by the Mott Foundation to provide evaluation, technical and networking support to the Community Foundations and Neighborhoods Small Grants Program -- and to write this book.

Rainbow Research visited each community annually, meeting with community foundation staff, board and advisory committee members, and funded neighborhood groups, and reviewing program documents from each site. We organized annual conferences for the eight community foundations, where they could share lessons being discovered in their individual settings with each other and explore topics of common concern. Starting in the second year of the program we produced a newsletter, PARTNER, to share program findings among the national audience interested in neighborhood self-help activity and community foundation/neighborhood collaborations, as well as the eight participating community foundations. And we produced a series of annual reports, critiquing the program and summarizing findings.

We found that community foundations indeed could be effective vehicles for supporting low income neighborhood organizations. In city after

city we saw fledgling neighborhood groups in low income areas achieving physical, social, political, and economic gains for their neighborhoods; and we found that these groups' effectiveness increased with community foundation support -- especially when that included the right mix of technical and other kinds of support, properly timed and targeted.

We also saw significant beneficial impact on the community foundations themselves: their grantmaking and programming skills, their stature in the community, and their connections to other elements of community leadership all increased. Most also saw their assets grow rapidly during the years they were in the Mott neighborhoods program.

Seeing this success, the Mott Foundation decided to share these discoveries with other community foundations that might want to work with low income neighborhood groups in their own communities, or that might want to carve a distinctive image for themselves within their local philanthropic community. This book is the result of that decision, and of considerable effort on the part of many people.

We formed an advisory committee, whose members critiqued an initial outline of this book in January 1988, a partial draft in November 1988, and a complete second draft in July 1989. Theirs was a difficult task, demanding patience and large chunks of time as they waded through lengthy, rough drafts. We thank them all. A complete list of their names and affiliations appears in the Acknowledgments.

Two highly prized, additional advisors have been Suzanne Feurt, the skilled manager of Mott's community foundation programs and a persistent proponent of capacity building, who we thank especially as our own program officer (and unofficial editor) these five years; and Ruth Goins, who directs Mott's other neighborhoods programs and who became an excellent advisor as we prepared this book.

Guide to this book

Chapter One introduces the reader to neighborhoods and neighborhood organizations, and presents rationales for community foundation support of low income neighborhood organizations.

Chapter Two gives guidance in structuring a grantmaking program for neighborhood organizations.

Chapter Three describes what community foundations can do beyond grantmaking to help neighborhood organizations become effective.

Chapter Four presents features of a neighborhoods grant program that will expand a community foundation's own capabilities, as well as increase support within the community for low income neighborhood self-help activity.

Chapter Five describes the range of neighborhood projects supported by community foundations in the Community Foundations and Neighborhoods Small Grants Program, and presents hallmarks of successful projects.

Chapter Six is a neighborhoods program assessment checklist that can be used by community foundations and neighborhood groups in planning, evaluating and training.

Appendix A describes the Community Foundations and Neighborhoods Small Grants Program in detail, and briefly presents how the program operated in the eight participating community foundations.

Appendix B gives a directory of the eight community foundations and the resource organizations that assisted them in their neighborhoods grant programs.

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Our fond hope is that this book will induce and equip community foundation boards and staff across the country to begin programs of support for low income neighborhood organizations.

For the others who read this -- neighborhood activists, private funders, government community development specialists, and other public and private resources to community-building initiatives in low income areas -- we hope that this book sheds light on how to work more effectively with community foundations and with resident-controlled neighborhood organizations.

Steven E. Mayer and David M. Scheie
Rainbow Research, Inc.
August, 1989

Acknowledgments

Participants in the Community Foundations and Neighborhoods Small Grants Program, 1984-1989

Arizona Community Foundation (Phoenix): Stephen D. Mittenthal, Executive Director

Foundation For The Carolinas (Charlotte): William L. Spencer, Executive Director (originally Gordon S. Berg); Barbara Hautau, Vice President

The Dayton Foundation (Ohio): Frederick Bartenstein, III, Director; Janet Henry (originally Sue Elling), Program Officer; Marianne Gorczyca, Neighborhoods Program Consultant

Greater Kansas City Community Foundation and Affiliated Trusts: Janice C. Kreamer, President; Dalene D. Bradford, Vice President

Community Foundation of New Jersey (Morristown): Sheila C. Williamson, Executive Director; Barbara A. Gille, Program Officer

Oregon Community Foundation (Portland): Gregory A. Chaille, Executive Director (originally Edward Look); Kathleen Cornett, Program Officer (originally Greg Chaille)

San Diego Community Foundation: Helen Monroe, Executive Director; Jeffrey A. Hale, Special Projects Administrator

Greater Worcester Community Foundation (Massachusetts): Kay Marquet Seivard, Executive Director

Book Advisory Committee

The Book Advisory Committee consisted of staff from each of the participating community foundations, plus:

Dennis Boody, Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance

Jean Entine, The Boston Foundation

Ron Hick, The Minneapolis Foundation

Lorraine Laurie, Green Island Residents Group (Worcester, MA)

Bill Slotnik, Community Training and Assistance Center (Boston)

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Garland Yates, Center for Community Change (Washington, DC)

CHAPTER ♦ ONE

Why Support Low Income Neighborhood Organizations?

Neighborhoods today

The Brooklyn neighborhood in southeast Portland, Oregon showed familiar symptoms of inner-city neighborhood decline in the early 1980s. Its population was shrinking and aging; its housing stock was aging and deteriorating. Enrollment in the neighborhood school was declining, as was local involvement in school affairs. The neighborhood's one small park was being taken over by drinkers and drifters. Brooklyn seemed to be on the way to nowhere, forgotten even by its own residents.

When the school board announced its intention to close the Brooklyn elementary school in 1985, neighborhood residents were galvanized into action. They sensed that closing the school could be a final, fatal acceleration of their neighborhood's decline. With a VISTA volunteer recruited from within the neighborhood and $5000 from the Oregon Community Foundation's neighborhoods grants program, the neighborhood organization Brooklyn Action Corps developed a "neighborhood marketing plan" to stabilize the school and neighborhood population by increasing the number of families with young children in the neighborhood.

They created a brochure, "Come Home to Brooklyn," which was used to educate realtors and others about the neighborhood's strengths -- its central location, history, multiracial population, school, and relatively low-priced housing. Realtors were also enlisted to stage "Super Sunday" open house days in the neighborhood.

To strengthen the neighborhood from within, the Action Corps went door-to-door to encourage residents to use the city's low-interest home improvement loan program. "Brooklyn" identity signs were designed and erected on streetposts around the neighborhood. A recycling program was begun, cosponsored by the PTA. Signs were posted and enforcement of the no-alcohol rule in Brooklyn Park was promoted.

Brooklyn Action Corps made Brooklyn School a greater focal point for neighborhood life. Through its newsletter and other outreach work, the Action Corps promoted use of the YMCA latchkey program at the school. Together with a revived Community School and PTA, they cosponsored the "Brooklyn Film Festival" which showed free family movies every month in the school auditorium. Through testimony at public hearings and behind-the-scenes advocacy, Brooklyn Action Corps convinced the School Board to keep Brooklyn School open for five more years.

By 1989, school enrollment was up to 150 from a 1986 low of 120. A tour of the neighborhood reveals numerous renovated houses. Brooklyn neighborhood activists, meanwhile, have emerged as leaders in the broader community, serving on several southeast Portland planning and governing boards. One former Action Corps president was elected state representative in 1988.

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This story illustrates some of the issues facing neighborhoods, and how neighborhood organizations are able to mobilize for constructive change. Investing in neighborhoods, working with neighborhood organizations to bring about constructive change, is what this book is about.

Neighborhoods are where millions of Americans live. Bounded by rivers, highways, railroads, major streets, or other barriers, known by their parks and schools, churches and shops, they have names, histories, and identities of their own. Even in an era of freeways, suburbs, and televisions, neighborhoods command a sense of place for many Americans. They are the first unit of community larger than the family.

In many ways, the frontiers of community-building are found in neighborhoods. Neighborhoods offer the promise of social action on a human scale. Distances are small. People are likely to be familiar with one another, or at least to cross paths in the park, the laundromat, or in church.

What is a neighborhood organization and what can one do?

This guidebook defines a neighborhood organization as a resident-controlled self-help group that works to improve the quality of life for neighborhood residents.

"Resident-controlled" means that the organization operates within definable geographical boundaries and that residents of the neighborhood govern the organization. A neighborhood organization is structurally independent of city government structures or other organizations.

"Self-help" means that the organization works to help residents develop and implement their own solutions for improving conditions. These solutions often tap citizen resources previously overlooked, or combine familiar resources in new ways. Crime watch programs supplement police protection with neighborly vigilance. Education efforts enlist neighborhood elders as mentors to impressionable teenagers. Job banks serve both employers and resident workers.

"Improve the quality of life" means that the organization works to improve conditions in the neighborhood in ways that benefit its residents. Here are some things that neighborhood organizations often do:

- They sponsor mutual aid programs such as tool libraries to help residents maintain their homes and yards, and community gardens to generate local produce.
- They conduct cleanup and recycling programs.
- They fix up abandoned or deteriorated houses, and convert vacant lots into parks and gardens.
- They plan for neighborhood land use, economic revitalization, transportation, and other services, and then work as advocates, organizers, and monitors to put the plans into practice.
- They sponsor festivals and feasts, and honor volunteers and good neighbors to develop the spirit of community.
- They encourage neighborly watchfulness, build working relationships with the police, and sponsor training in personal safety and home security.

Through all these activities, neighborhood organizations build skills, offer opportunities for personal development and leadership, and replace community perceptions of indifference and cynicism with pride and initiative.

These activities emerge from the conditions which neighborhood organizations foster: pride, hope, dignity, caring, a sense of importance, rootedness, commitment, community-mindedness, competence -- the capacity to develop solutions and work together, and to participate more fully in the broader community.

A community foundation that wants to be relevant to its community's social problems and connected to the full spectrum of people in its community -- plain as well as glamorous, threadbare as well as prosperous -- belongs in neighborhoods.

Supporting neighborhood organizations is a way of investing in common, everyday people to think about and work constructively toward solutions to these problems that so-called experts haven't yet solved. Since solutions to most major social problems will require the participation of common, everyday people, it makes sense to invest seed money in community organizations where those people are getting involved.

As a neighborhood activist in Kansas City said, "It's the people living around the problem that are saying, 'We're not going to live with this' that will lead to solutions."

Emerging organizations, neighborhood associations, and community development corporations

Roughly speaking, three major types of neighborhood organizations can be distinguished.

An **emerging neighborhood organization** is relatively inexperienced, informal, small, fragile, and in a formative stage. Commonly, an emerging organization has developed in response to a single

issue that looms prominently in the neighborhood, such as an intended but unwanted building development, a sudden increase in crime, or a toxic waste spill. An emerging organization strives to inform neighborhood residents of the threatening conditions, to involve residents in developing solutions, and to secure the needed resources and support to remedy the troublesome situation. It has a reason for being but has not acquired many of the institutional trappings of permanence and stability.

The emerging organization may not be incorporated. It may have only a small handful of identified leaders, no staff, and a loosely defined concept of membership. It may have no facility or space of its own, meeting instead in homes, churches or park buildings. Its written and financial records, and its administrative skills, may be minimal.

Its short history (at least as far as current members are concerned), small "track record" of accomplishments, limited size and experience combine to make the emerging organization both more fragile and more likely to grow quickly in capacity.

Like emerging groups, **neighborhood associations** typically focus on organizing and advocacy activities and relatively low-cost self-help and mutual aid projects. They advocate for the neighborhood's interests with the city, developers and other outside entities, and nurture the social cohesion of the neighborhood. The distinction between emerging organizations and neighborhood associations is one of degree more than of any official designation.

In contrast to emerging groups, associations have a relatively stable membership, experienced leadership, and institutionalized modes of operation. Their structure is more developed, with committees assigned to different tasks, by-laws, elections to office, and meetings that operate by Robert's Rules. They often have tax-exempt status and extensive written records. They are more likely to be involved with several different neighborhood issues simultaneously. They commonly have their own offices and at least one paid staffperson -- usually someone skilled in outreach and communication.

Community development corporations, or CDCs, sometimes evolve from neighborhood associations; others have been started from scratch. However, CDCs have a distinctly different purpose than either emerging organizations or associations -- they focus primarily on developing the physical and economic base of the neighborhood (as distinct from the social or community base), typically through housing development and job development projects.

CDCs may engage in advocacy for their neighborhoods, and may work to organize residents and provide opportunities to participate in community affairs. But their advocacy usually is confined to development issues, and their organizing usually focuses on strengthening the community base for their development projects.

CDCs acquire property and build and renovate residential, commercial, and industrial structures. They provide financing and planning assistance to local businesses, recruit businesses to the neighborhood, and promote job development activities. These activities are typically carried out by paid staff skilled in the technical details of these kinds of projects.

While most CDCs are controlled by neighborhood residents, many seats on their governing boards are allocated to representatives from other institutions or people with specialized expertise. Some CDCs are area-wide or even city-wide in focus and governance.

Neighborhood organizations and social service agencies

Social service agencies are active in many neighborhoods; and many neighborhood organizations are involved in planning, advocacy or delivery of social services at one time or another. However, most neighborhood organizations are not social service agencies, and most social service agencies are not neighborhood organizations. The difference lies in their purposes and governance.

Social service agencies typically see their purpose to be providing services to individuals and families. While the overall purpose is to improve the quality of life within an area, strategies are of the "service delivery" rather than the "self-help" variety. These services -- counseling, employment services, child care, recreation programs, food

distribution, congregate meals, etc. -- might well be needed in the neighborhood, but they focus on the needs of individuals rather than of the neighborhood.

Neighborhood organizations, in comparison, more commonly get involved in service issues as advocates rather than providers. Their purpose is to ensure that services are available to residents, rather than to provide services directly.

While neighborhood organizations are governed by local residents, most social service agencies are not. Authority over the agency usually rests with a board controlled by people who for the most part do not live in the neighborhood, and who are not elected by neighborhood residents.

A community foundation that supports only social service agencies is missing opportunities available for nurturing vitality within neighborhoods. By supporting neighborhood organizations as well, a community foundation supports basic building blocks of community development.

Neighborhood organizations are vehicles for reversing the political alienation and apathy especially common in low income populations. They are vehicles for bringing low income neighborhood residents into the full circle of citizenship. They offer the promise of changing "business as usual," "politics as usual," and "charity as usual" in the community so that fairness and public spiritedness can be increased.

For example in Kansas City, nearly a decade of neighborhood self-help activity supported by philanthropic, corporate and civic leadership produced not only numerous accomplishments in individual neighborhoods, but also citywide political victories in the late 1980s. Coalitions in which neighborhood leaders figured prominently successfully backed referenda for a public improvements sales tax and for improved health care access for low income people, and the city council passed a "Neighborhood Bill of Rights" which strengthened neighborhood participation in real estate development activities.

Why focus on low income neighborhoods?

Low income neighborhoods are, simply enough, those whose residents have lower incomes. They share goals with more affluent neighborhoods and with cities in general:

- Safety from decaying and unhealthy conditions, from environmental pollution, and from crime.
- Housing that is affordable, attractive, and secure.
- Opportunities for education, training, employment, and recreation.
- Involvement in the affairs and governance of the city.

However, low income neighborhoods differ from middle and upper income neighborhoods in some important ways. Resources are more scarce, opportunities more difficult to sustain, and urban and social ills are more prevalent. They are more often communities of color. Fewer residents have the power that comes with homeownership. Political participation is lower.

Isolated from the economic and political mainstream, low income neighborhoods often suffer from decisions made elsewhere. Bankers restrict loan funds. Retail companies close less-profitable stores in lower income neighborhoods. Absentee landlords play speculative shell games, milking cash flow from renters without providing maintenance. Politicians mark low income neighborhoods as hosts for freeways, sports arenas, convention centers, garbage transfer stations and chemical dependency facilities. City inspectors tolerate violations in low income neighborhoods that would be tagged promptly elsewhere. Police more often use brutal tactics and treat residents as problems, not victims.

But within low income neighborhoods lie seeds for revitalization. In the midst of abandonment, discrimination and dysfunction live people who consider this neighborhood their home and who work to make it a better place. In neighborhood organizations they are working together to solve their neighborhood's problems, give their neighborhood a voice in the decisions that affect it,

and get their fair share of opportunities and services.

A community foundation that supports low income neighborhood organizations shows a commitment to inclusiveness, to social justice, to empowerment, and to full participation of all citizens in community affairs. It shows a commitment to take risks: working in low income neighborhoods is not easy and not all grants will produce dramatic, easily evident results.

Why create a low income neighborhoods program?

Supporting neighborhood organizations in low income areas is consistent with the mission and values of most community foundations.

Benefits to the neighborhoods

Even with relatively small grants, community foundations can have a large impact on low income neighborhoods. Neighborhoods whose organizations are funded and actively supported in nonfinancial ways -- more about this later -- can expect to experience positive effects in three key areas:

- **Increased neighborhood livability.** Neighborhood organizations can achieve many specific improvements in neighborhood quality of life, such as improved neighborhood appearance, housing supply and quality, neighborhood centers and services, safety, job opportunity, community cohesion, and pride.
- **Increased organizational capacity.** Neighborhood organizations provide mechanisms to help develop solutions to neighborhood problems. They are vehicles by which residents can develop leadership skills and take leadership roles; work cooperatively with local government, businesses, schools, churches, and other organizations; and communicate neighborhood news, information and priorities.
- **Increased resources for addressing neighborhood problems.** Perhaps most dramatic, neighborhood organizations supported with even small grants and technical assistance can increase resources and support -- from local government, the business community, the media, and individuals -- to address local problems.

Benefits to the community at large

Since neighborhoods are part of the community at large, improvements at the neighborhood level benefit the whole community. Increased leadership and problem solving ability in low income neighborhoods contribute to the capacity of the entire community. The community's leadership base is broadened, allowing for greater cross-fertilization of ideas and more complete appraisals of community concerns. With the community's leadership responsibility shared by more individuals, there is less burnout and more accomplishment.

Similarly, the leadership and problem solving capacity developed by the community foundation in a neighborhoods program can be applied to other community concerns. People from city Hall, corporations, universities, private foundations, and neighborhoods can get to know each other through a neighborhood program advisory committee and can go on to address other community concerns together.

Neighborhood self-help capacity also offers a new mechanism for implementing community improvement strategies. That is, neighborhood organizations and community foundation neighborhoods programs can provide not only strategies for community improvement but vehicles for implementing those strategies.

Low income neighborhoods' improved scrutiny of public policies and expenditures can lead to better, fairer use of public funds. And neighborhood improvement strategies which tap citizens' capacity can improve the quality of life without further straining public services.

Healthy neighborhoods underpin a city's economic base. A city with active, vibrant neighborhoods is more likely to retain businesses, host business expansion, and attract new enterprise. Strong neighborhoods can help stem the flow of middle class taxpayers to the suburbs. Healthy neighborhoods signify a strong social fabric.

Benefits to the community foundation

Community foundations can reap benefits directly from a program of support to low income neighborhood organizations.

Enhanced legitimacy and stature. Supporting low income neighborhood self-help efforts communicates a community foundation's orientation and values in a very effective way. It bespeaks an inclusive rather than elitist vision of the community; a participative, democratic approach to community concerns; and a self-reliant, team-oriented ethic. It's proof that the community foundation is "out there," sleeves rolled up, engaged with people in distressed parts of the community. It shows the community foundation's willingness to take risks and to support empowerment and self-determination of low income people. "This program made us feel like a community foundation ought to feel," is a common sentiment among community foundation executives and trustees operating neighborhoods grants programs.

A well-done neighborhoods grants program will give a community foundation a distinctive image in its local funding and policymaking community. It will also earn credibility for the community foundation among low income residents.

Specialized grantmaking and programming skills. A focused program of grantmaking and support to low income neighborhood organizations has many features in common with focused grantmaking in other areas: developing grantmaking guidelines, application review procedures, and grants management practices. In addition, however, because of the special nature of low income neighborhood organizations, three other areas can become more strongly developed: using a community advisory committee, providing a program of supportive assistance to grantees, and monitoring and evaluating small grants to small organizations.

A program of support to low income neighborhoods will increase the community foundation's knowledge base -- about neighborhoods and their problems, about community resources for addressing those problems, and about strategies for using those resources effectively.

This will move the community foundation closer to the innovative edge of social action, and increase its capacity to impact community problems. Several community foundation executive directors in the Mott program said that small grants to neighborhood organizations give more impact per dollar than anything else they do.

Stronger community relationships. A neighborhoods program opens up new sources of information to the community foundation by providing regular opportunities to listen directly to low income neighborhood residents and leaders, not professional staff or other surrogates. This positions the community foundation differently than most other funders.

A neighborhoods program also gives opportunities to strengthen a foundation's community leadership infrastructure -- through focusing community attention, and through convening and catalytic work with other local institutions concerned with community improvement: local government, private and corporate funders, banks, and specialized community-building organizations.

Neighborhood organizations' interests touch on so many sectors of the community that the community foundation will have many opportunities to relate to these sectors in new ways.

New program opportunities. As its knowledge base of community concerns grows, the community foundation will discover opportunities for new grantmaking. Its network of community actors and its skills in grant program design and implementation will equip the foundation to initiate these programs and carry them out with greater success.

Small grants to emerging neighborhood organizations can lead to new programs in such areas as homelessness, energy conservation, literacy, education, and community-based economic development. Conversely, a neighborhoods program can complement existing programs. Issues come into new focus: neighborhood improvement efforts touch on themes economic, spiritual, political, cultural, artistic, environmental, and social. And new partnerships emerge, with other private and public funders and with neighborhood-based delivery organizations.

CHAPTER ♦ TWO

Structuring the Program

Defining the goals of the program

The first step in creating a program to support low income neighborhood organizations is to define goals for the program. Goals should be broadly stated and focus on support for resident-based neighborhood organizations in working to solve significant local problems. Emphasis could be placed on:

- Increasing the base of resident participation and leadership in developing solutions to neighborhood problems.
- Increasing the capacity of neighborhood organizations to plan and implement neighborhood improvement strategies.
- Increasing the linkages between neighborhood organizations and other institutions capable of providing support.
- Increasing the financial and other resources available for neighborhood self-help efforts.

Note that these program goals do not specify the *types* of solutions sought, or the *types* of activities or projects to be undertaken. Specifying these would contradict the basic purposes of a neighborhoods program -- to encourage local initiative, to tap resident skills and energy, and to support a local process for problem solving.

Defining goals for the program is best done in consultation with neighborhood leaders and others knowledgeable of issues facing low income neighborhoods.

Goals can then be elaborated through a set of guidelines that specify what types of organizations are eligible for support. The following guidelines may be useful:

Qualifying neighborhood groups should:

- Have specific geographic boundaries.
- Be working creatively on significant local issues and problems.
- Provide evidence of broad-based community support (such as open and inclusive membership policies, membership which reflects neighborhood demographics, multiple avenues for resident involvement, and financial support from local residents and institutions).
- Have local leadership that demonstrate accountability to the neighborhood (such as reports to the community in newsletters or flyers, publicized meetings, an elected Board or steering committee made up of neighborhood residents).
- Have goals that reflect the neighborhood's concerns.
- Be based in a neighborhood which is considered low income (such as by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition of median resident income at 50% of the metropolitan median, or by residents' prevailing self-definition), or moderate income at most.
- Be engaged in charitable purposes as defined by the IRS (official tax exempt status is not required to receive a grant from a community foundation).

In designing the program, community foundations may wish to decide whether to emphasize support of (a) *low income* neighborhoods rather than a larger range of income levels, and (b) *emerging* organizations more than more developed organizations.

The Mott program worked in low income neighborhoods, supporting primarily emerging organizations. Groups in low income areas were targeted because those neighborhoods have the greatest needs and access to the fewest resources. It was felt that small doses of external support would most likely contribute to capacity growth in emerging organizations that were in a formative phase. These priorities proved to be worthwhile and will be repeated in Mott's plans for future grantmaking of this type. This book is based on those same two choices.

The case for small grants

The Mott program's guidelines capped the maximum grant allowed at $7500 in the first three years, and $10,000 in Years 4 and 5. While this was called a "minigrant" program, this maximum proved to be quite substantial for most emerging organizations.

The average grant actually awarded was closer to $3500, and many were in the $1000-to-$2500 range. These amounts launched a large amount of activity. All participating community foundations agreed that the cost-effectiveness of these minigrants was very high when compared with other uses of that amount of money (such as scholarships, cash-flow loans, brochures, or general operating support to larger organizations).

Reasons for this high cost-effectiveness include:

- Grants support passionate volunteers on a mission instead of investing in buildings or staff. Emerging neighborhood organizations typically are not staffed (or they might have one part-time paid person) and pay little or no rent.
- Much of the work of emerging neighborhood organizations is low cost in nature. Community gardens, block captain networks, newsletters, festivals, crime watch programs, cleanup campaigns, tool libraries, public awareness campaigns -- typical activities of emerging neighborhood groups -- depend primarily on volunteer commitment rather than paid professional help, and consume few materials.
- Since much of the grant award goes for organizing community involvement and community strategizing, the yield is high: increases in membership development, leadership skills, and citizen participation.

Other virtues of small grants:

- A small grant is more in scale with an emerging organization's capacities than is a large grant. Scaling the grant award (and objectives) to the organization's capabilities to implement and manage it is consistent with the goal of helping it to grow. An overly-large grant can easily overwhelm a small organization.
- Small grants can attract support from other sources. The mere fact of community foundation support, almost independent of grant size, gives an organization credibility and can be used to attract grants and in-kind contributions from others.
- Obtaining financial support makes an organization "real" like it never was before. While that is a clear benefit, it can also provoke destructive debate until group members develop skills in planning, organizational management, and conflict management. That stress usually increases with grant size. It may be better to let such skills develop with a small grant.

More advanced neighborhood organizations may require more substantial support. They will have become large enough that a paid coordinator may be a productive addition to the budget, and they may be developing projects that require greater capital.

Community foundations may, of course, decide to support more advanced neighborhood organizations instead of (or in addition to) emerging neighborhood organizations. Support of the same emerging organizations beyond a few years should put those organizations in this more-advanced category as well.

Of critical importance, however, if a neighborhood organization evolves into a community development corporation, is to pay continued attention to the basic community-building activities that brought the organization to its advanced status: outreach, resident education, opportunities for involvement, and leadership skills development.

From the Mott Files:

In Dayton and San Diego, the community foundations operated two grant pools for neighborhood groups within this program. A "popcorn" pool was reserved for the smallest, most emerging groups. It made grants of $500 to $2000 for smaller self-help projects: tools for a tool-sharing library, seeds and fencing for community gardens, neighborhood festivals, etc. A second pool made grants of $3000 to $10,000 to more experienced groups.

Grants from this pool typically supported long-range or comprehensive neighborhood planning and preparations for undertaking housing development projects.

Finding emerging, low income neighborhood organizations

Not all cities are equally endowed with low income neighborhood organizations. Certain kinds of neighborhoods support such organizations better than others -- those neighborhoods with a history, a key institution such as a church or community center, an issue or threat that can motivate people to join forces, as well as at least one visible leader who is known and respected in the neighborhood.

Cities with such neighborhoods often are older rather than newer, have a business community that already recognizes the value of neighborhoods, and/or have a city or county office or program that recognizes and legitimizes neighborhoods. Not all of these elements need to be present, but each contributes to a vital role for neighborhoods within the city's life.

Below are some key sources to help identify low income neighborhood organizations:

- Local offices of national organizations active in neighborhood issues, such as Community Action Programs, Legal Aid, and Neighborhood Housing Services; low income advocacy organizations, such as tenants unions, voter registration groups, homeless advocates, ethnic and minority organizations, women's organizations, etc.
- Individuals already identified as neighborhood leaders.
- Churches, including denominational and ecumenical social justice and community affairs offices.
- Government offices: city council members and staff, mayor's office, community development agency, planning department, neighborhoods office, parks and recreation department, etc. Census data can reveal low income areas.

Exploring the community for emerging low income neighborhood organizations allows a community foundation to become familiar with these resources, and they with the community foundation. Any of these resources could become ongoing partners, advisors, or contributors to the program.

Outreach

Once a list of potential grantee organizations is identified, there are two basic ways to approach them: the "quiet" approach and the public approach using a Request For Proposals.

In the **quiet approach**, organizations are informally prescreened before being invited to apply for funding. Knowledgeable advisors -- often those who helped develop the community foundation's list of eligible neighborhood groups -- can assess the strengths, problems and opportunities of various groups.

This approach allows the community foundation to become more familiar with the sources discussed in the previous section, and they with the community foundation. It can yield excellent grantees.

On the other hand, this approach does little to generate broad visibility for the community foundation. If outreach is quiet, take steps to make the program visible thereafter.

The quiet approach limits the opportunity to learn about the full range of a community's neighborhood organizations. And it can take a great deal of time, since the research burden is on the foundation, not on prospective grantees.

Undertake this approach carefully, since it runs contrary to the public nature of community foundations -- it may draw criticism about "insider" grantmaking.

A **Request For Proposals** (RFP) process requires writing an official set of clearly stated program goals, eligibility guidelines and proposal review criteria, as well as a timeline for decision making. The community foundation will need to distribute this Request for Proposals to a list of neighborhood organizations. It will want to schedule a public meeting to announce and describe the program. Plan to support applicants in preparing

applications, and conduct application reviews in accordance with announced guidelines.

Advantages of an RFP include fostering a fair process. It also raises the visibility of the program and the community foundation.

On the other hand, managing the process can take a great deal of time. It may also cause feelings of competition among applicants which may be undesirable -- it takes more sophistication than these groups typically have to develop truly competitive proposals, and "losing" adds one more frustration to their experience.

A combination of both approaches could be to limit circulation of the Request for Proposals to a certain number of organizations that have been quietly researched -- a number small enough that quality application assistance can be provided to all.

Grant application procedures

Assistance to Applicants

Since emerging low income neighborhood organizations typically are unfamiliar with the requirements of conventional grantsmanship, it makes sense to simplify the community foundation's usual application procedures. Potential applicants will find these procedures helpful:

- A well-publicized meeting to explain the program's purposes and procedures (it's good to hold this in a neighborhood setting, with media present).
- A clear statement of the criteria to be used in choosing among applications.
- Assistance to potential applicants to help scale their objectives appropriately, to help them develop the rudiments of a realistic plan, and to adjust expectations. Less demand for written evidence, and an application form stripped of all but the most essential questions.
- Less demand for the formal trappings of more sophisticated organizations: by-laws, 5-year plan, audit, etc.
- More reliance on on-site inquiry and discussion with applicants.
- Input in evaluating applications from a community advisory mechanism that is familiar with low income neighborhood groups, their issues and needs.

Application Review

When reviewing applications and conducting site visits to neighborhood applicants, there are a number of things to look for.

Remember that many of the formal organizational features associated with more established organizations may be missing. Since many of the things the community foundation will need to satisfy itself about will not be evidenced on paper, a site visit almost certainly will be necessary to review a neighborhood group's application.

Look for the following:

- An agenda that is defined and governed by neighborhood residents. This is an essential ingredient, one that differentiates a neighborhood organization from service agencies.
- Organization members and leaders who display a clear sense of the neighborhood and the people their organization serves.
- Members who share a common vision -- a common adversary (a planned highway, drug dealers, toxic dumping); or a common response (get highway-building jobs for neighborhood residents, organize a crime watch, get enforcement of business licenses).
- Members and leaders who reflect the demographic characteristics of the neighborhood. Make sure leaders are not all from the same family or the same block in the neighborhood.
- Clear, well-publicized opportunities for participation and leadership. Ideally, there should be a variety of opportunities for participation (though these may not be present at first).
- Energetic and persistent leaders who are accountable to the membership and can draw people together and develop organizational capacity.

- Basic rudiments of organizational structure (written records of meetings, elections, checking account) -- although sometimes even these rudiments don't emerge for several months.
- Realistic plans that address important neighborhood concerns, develop the capacity of the organization itself, and reflect internal consensus.
- A record of accomplishment, however modest.

Here are a few caveats to keep in mind when reviewing applications:

- A group with only one leader has an extra burden of proving that it's legitimate and able to get important things done. Broadening its leadership base is a priority.
- A collaborative effort among adjoining neighborhoods can be an excellent idea, but it must be supported by the individual neighborhoods.
- Staffing, if any, must be fully accountable to the neighborhood, through a Board or steering committee.
- Attend a neighborhood meeting to see who shows up, who is in charge, the nature of decision making, how conflict is handled, and how power is shared. Imagine in what ways a grant can help.

Grants management

The basic elements of grants management in a neighborhoods program -- the grant award letter, payment schedule, fiscal accountability, grantee monitoring and reporting practices, and grant renewal criteria -- are common to other community foundation grantmaking programs. The emerging nature of these organizations, however, suggests some modifications.

Grant award letter

The grant award letter should clearly state what the money is for, when the money will be released and in what amounts, reporting requirements, monitoring plans, and any modifications or contingencies attached to the grant.

Contingencies might include releasing money only upon submitting reports, or upon starting or finishing some activity deemed necessary for likely success such as increasing the membership, creating a plan, attending a workshop on financial management, or raising matching resources. Contingencies should be used sparingly with small grants.

Grant payment schedule

Many neighborhood projects are seasonal or depend on the weather -- tree plantings, clean-ups, holiday decoration contests, groundbreakings, home repairs, etc. Sometimes these projects require that certain payments be pre-paid. The community foundation should be aware of these possibilities in scheduling payment.

Some, if not all, of the grant should be paid "up front." A more frequent schedule of smaller payments is appropriate only when there are specified contingencies. Grant periods are typically one year, though multi-year support could be considered when there are clear expectations of progress.

Fiscal accountability

Since fledgling neighborhood organizations often lack experience in managing money, there are several things a community foundation can do to ensure that neighborhood grantees are fiscally accountable:

- Encourage organizations to be fiscally accountable to their membership: open books, basic controls, an elected treasurer.
- State clearly what records and expense documentation are required. Include this in the grant letter or attachment.
- Teach basic financial management. This can be done in group workshops or individual consultations, by the community foundation or by an assistance provider.
- Funnel the grant through a fiscal agent if greater accountability is required.

The community foundation itself can serve as a fiscal agent. Remember that a grantee need not be tax exempt to receive a grant from a community foundation.

A fiscal agent is especially useful if it will teach financial management skills. Appropriate fiscal agents include neighborhood service centers, community development corporations, churches, and nonprofit technical assistance providers. If one fiscal agent will handle several grantees, it minimizes red tape. Caution: make sure the fiscal agent has the necessary skills!

Monitoring neighborhood activity and progress

Monitoring should be conducted in ways that contribute to the development of the neighborhood organization and to the community foundation's own need to learn about their activity.

As in other grantmaking programs, neighborhood grantees can be required to file written progress reports periodically, such as once or twice yearly. Preparing a report is an occasion to reflect on accomplishments and difficulties, to formulate strategies for making progress, and to boost writing skills -- all skills useful in other contexts.

But with emerging, low-skilled organizations there are good reasons for relying on site visits to the neighborhood, phone calls and other contacts as well as written reports.

Emerging groups' reports are more likely to omit significant information (especially if the report form does not ask for it in just the right way). Writing reports also takes time away from grantees' other activities, and may create apprehension if grantees lack strong writing skills.

More information can be collected from neighborhood visits and telephone conversations. In addition, these visits are opportunities for the community foundation to play the supportive roles that emerging organizations particularly appreciate -- encouraging, troubleshooting, and suggesting helpful approaches. They are also opportunities to involve others, such as the community foundation's distribution committee, neighborhoods program advisory committee, or trustees.

Another method for collecting information about grantee progress is to convene annual or semi-annual sharing meetings of all neighborhood grant recipients. Most appreciate the opportunity to get to know and learn from each other.

Since furnishing monitoring information costs grantees valuable time, make sure there's a use for the information requested.

Considering grant renewals

At the end of the first and succeeding years of grantmaking, choices must be faced about continuing support to neighborhood organizations. Will the community foundation stay with the same grantees, open the door to new ones, or both? On what basis will renewals be considered?

It is best to consider these questions early, even as the program's goals, guidelines, and procedures are designed. This allows the program to be more clear to neighborhood organizations as they prepare their initial applications and progress reports.

Chapter Three presents a case for allowing multi-year support for an emerging organization, especially when there are signs that it is making progress toward goals, pursuing a promising approach, or developing a more capable organization.

Using a neighborhood advisory committee

A neighborhoods grants program can be greatly strengthened through the use of a neighborhood advisory committee. Candidates for inclusion on a neighborhood advisory committee are the same as those listed above as sources for finding out about low income neighborhood organizations. Community foundation trustees also can make excellent committee members, and can strengthen the program's base within the foundation.

Such a committee can help with a variety of grantmaking tasks, including:

- Developing the goals and guidelines of the program, and designing all program operations.
- Locating suitable neighborhood organizations.
- Reviewing applications.
- Monitoring neighborhood activity and conducting year-end reviews.

- Informing the community foundation trustees of the progress of the program and its grantees.
- Educating various community institutions and constituencies about the program, the community foundation, and issues of low income neighborhoods.
- Providing program continuity through expressions of support to the trustees and other funders.
- Helping to secure additional opportunities for neighborhood organizations.

The benefits of a formal neighborhood advisory committee can be substantial, going far beyond the relatively routine tasks its members are called upon to perform. By including people from different institutions and different constituencies, a neighborhood advisory committee increases community ownership of the program. It "sends a message" to the larger community and legitimizes low income neighborhood organizations and their issues. It increases the community foundation's commitment to the program, as well as the chances for program continuity.

The committee increases the amount of networking and advocacy on behalf of neighborhoods, which increases the likely success and benefits of grants to neighborhood organizations. It helps the community foundation become a listening post and discussion place for grassroots developments and urban issues. It increases the community foundation's capacity to create new opportunities that serve neighborhoods and the community.

Institutions represented on the committee will increase their expertise in low income neighborhoods and may undertake supportive initiatives of their own.

Individual neighborhood advisory committee members can become suitable candidates for other community foundation decisionmaking roles, such as the distribution committee, Board of Trustees, staff positions, or positions on other topical advisory committees.

Trustee involvement

While community foundation staff can develop and operate the mechanics of the program, it is essential that trustees be committed to its success if the program is to have a long life. To aid this commitment, it is desirable that Board (and distribution committee) members be informed and perhaps even involved in the activities of the neighborhoods program.

Fortunately, such involvement is exactly what many (though not all) trustees like to do. A neighborhoods grants program closely fits the ideals of a community foundation -- ideals which attract many trustees to the community foundation in the first place. For some, these neighborhoods are familiar, and support of them is desirable. A neighborhoods grant program gives trustees a taste of proactive, programmatic, discretionary grantmaking -- many trustees in the Mott program have spoken eloquently of the power of this experience.

Opportunities for trustee involvement include:

- Serving on the neighborhood advisory committee.
- Helping to locate suitable program applicants, or helping with site visits and application reviews.
- Requesting reports as a Board from staff, advisory committee, consultants, or neighborhood spokespeople.
- Contributing to financial support of the neighborhoods program, through grants from the discretionary fund, individual donations, and in-kind contributions.
- Participating in community foundation-sponsored tours of neighborhoods.

Costs

Costs of operating a neighborhoods grants program can be grouped in three categories: grant and assistance awards, direct costs, and personnel costs.

Grant and assistance awards

A minigrants program, such as the one supported by the Mott Foundation, can be successful with a maximum grant size of $7,500 to a minimum of five groups per year. More grants will increase community-wide impact and may be necessary in larger cities.

Up to a quarter of a neighborhoods grants pool could be effectively allocated for technical assistance to grantees, including travel. Even more could be well used in some cases.

Personnel costs

The Mott experience suggests that a staff person could easily be engaged quarter-time to half-time on a neighborhoods grantmaking program. This figure represents a seasonally adjusted average, and depends on the number of grants made, frequency of grantmaking cycles, fragility of grantee organizations, models of technical assistance used, monitoring activities, fragility of program funding base, and committee work.

If all of the practices suggested in this book became part of one person's job description, the time commitment could approach full-time.

How much staff time the community foundation devotes to this program depends on the goals it has for itself. As shown in later chapters, the community foundation can benefit tremendously from this program in terms of assets, reputation, and position, but only if it *invests its own* time, reputation, and position. To the extent vital functions are contracted out to consultants, technical assistance providers, or intermediary organizations, many of these benefits are jeopardized.

Direct costs

Direct costs of outreach, communications, advisory activities and involvement with grantees include:

- Meetings (locale, refreshments, child care).
- Publicity (press releases, brochures).
- Travel (researching neighborhoods, pre-grant visits, post-grant monitoring, assistance, group tours).
- Copying, mailing, telephone.

From the Mott Files:

In the Mott program, community foundations' annual grants pool ranged from $20,000 to $100,000. With an average grant size of slightly under $4,000, this allowed between 5 and 30 grants per year.

CHAPTER ♦ THREE

Helping Neighborhood Organizations Become Effective

Whether neighborhood grantees thrive depends largely on the support given them *in addition to money*. This is especially true with emerging, low income neighborhood organizations.

This chapter explores features of a neighborhoods grant program that help to ensure the success of neighborhood grantees by nurturing their growth, stability, and effectiveness.

Encourage "capacity building"

A grant to a neighborhood organization should serve two goals simultaneously: (a) it should allow the organization to provide something immediately useful to residents; and (b) it should provide a practical basis for immediate organizational development. Together, these add up to "capacity building."

What is meant by "capacity" in a neighborhood organization? We consider three areas to be key: community organizing, organizational development, and project design and management.

Community organizing

The phrase "community organizing" is inflammatory to some because of its older association with confrontive tactics. Actually it refers to many of the same skills emphasized in programs that teach "leadership development," "management," "group facilitation," "voluntarism," "public affairs," and "self help."

"Community organizing" refers to a set of activities meant to improve the neighborhood's viability through activities that use the strengths and energies of neighborhood residents and lead to specific changes and improvements. This involves securing the organization's base in the neighborhood: ensuring that the organization is representative of the neighborhood and is recognized by residents as legitimate, and ensuring that the organization works for the neighborhood's interests. An important goal of community organizing is to increase involvement of low income residents in decisions that affect their neighborhood.

Community organizing includes knowing how to invite people to participate in the affairs of the neighborhood organization, how to design events and activities that build involvement and neighborhood identity, how to develop leadership in others, how to build a base of support, and how to keep people involved but avoid burnout. It involves building consensus, managing conflict creatively, and balancing action, reflection, and celebration.

More specific skills include:

- Communicating, especially active listening.
- Identifying and analyzing issues.
- Envisioning the community's future.
- Developing action strategies for community improvement.
- Creating support for the neighborhood's agenda among key people and segments of the community.

Organizational development

Both skills and structures are important aspects of "organizational development."

In many low income neighborhoods, organizing a neighborhood group may be many residents' first organizational experience. Many will benefit from training in such skills as how to run a meeting, how to develop a plan, how to keep a checkbook, how to write a budget, how to be a board or committee member, how to write a newsletter, how to write a grant proposal, how to keep records. Many community organizing skills are useful within the organization, too, especially skills in setting goals, building consensus, and handling conflict within the group.

An organization's capacity for sustained effectiveness is increased when it has structures to help weather time and crises. Written mission statements, articles of incorporation, and by-laws are helpful reference points for clarifying group purpose. Board terms of two or three years, overlapping, instead of having all seats turnover annually, build in stability and continuity.

Project design and management

Each neighborhood project has associated with it a number of skills and specialized bodies of knowledge that need development. A gardening project demands some skill with gardening. A crime watch requires knowledge of crime prevention techniques. Building homes requires a host of construction, financing, and management skills and knowledge.

All projects benefit from clear, thorough, and realistic design and management. Project design includes identifying goals, action steps, people, and timelines. Management includes seeing to it that the plan is put into action and modifying the plan when circumstances require, as often happens. These skills overlap with organizing and organizational management skills.

Communicating expectations of capacity growth

The community foundation should communicate expectations of capacity development in its transactions with applicants and grantees. Without expectations of strengthened capacity, it is easy for grantees to regard the minigrant as "maintenance money" or as support for general operations. The goal for neighborhood organizations is to become better and better at what they do, so that they can really change things for their neighborhoods.

Grantees can also be helped to recognize that the development of their own effectiveness is key to attracting funds for this program.

There are several opportunities to communicate this expectation during the community foundation's relationship with neighborhood groups:

- Program guidelines should emphasize the importance of organizational capacity building.
- Pre-grant discussions and assistance given to applicants should focus on crafting proposals that deliver on the two key goals of capacity building.
- Technical assistance offered grantees should help them develop their project and community organizing skills as well as their organizational development skills. Assistance should help them build on their present strengths and consolidate gains, and should be widely and generously available.
- Monitoring should focus on organizational capacity building as well as progress with proposed activities. Year-end evaluations, and sharing meetings among grantees, can be opportunities to consider how the gains of the past year can be parlayed into subsequent gains.

From the Mott Files:

Community Foundation of New Jersey staff as well as Arizona Community Foundation staff worked with neighborhood groups to set goals at the beginning of each grant year. Proposed projects were adjusted and refined cooperatively until they delivered on both key goals of capacity building. In New Jersey, the groups' growth objectives (e.g. take in 15 new members) were written into the grant letter, and release of funds at mid-year was made contingent on satisfactory progress toward goals.

The Dayton Foundation made some grants contingent on the preparation of 5-year growth plans (but not in their first year of support).

Nuestro Barrio neighborhood association in Phoenix has been active for at least five years. First they started a tool library for residents' home maintenance. After that had established the organization's legitimacy with neighborhood residents, Nuestro Barrio became the neighborhood's watchdog on an adjacent industrial park development.

That involved advocating with the city to protect and enhance the neighborhood's interests. The neighborhood won a commitment that local residents would have priority access to new jobs at the industrial park. This led the neighborhood group to canvass the neighborhood and inventory local job skills for placement in these new jobs. As these planning and negotiating activities went on, Nuestro Barrio also conducted ongoing block club formation and maintenance activities. This progression illustrates the increased capacity of the organization.

Provide ongoing technical assistance

A grant to an emerging low income neighborhood organization isn't nearly as effective as a grant *plus* an active program of expert assistance, often called "technical assistance" (TA).

Why? Because healthy growth is enhanced by support and stimulation from outside. Outside assistance can help with all three areas of capacity development: community organizing, organizational skills, and project skills.

Outside assistance helps emerging organizations prioritize their choices, focus their energy, plot a course of action, resolve conflicts, and make good use of resources.

Investing a portion of program grant dollars -- as much as 25% -- for use in technical assistance can be highly worthwhile.

Models of assistance provision

A program of technical assistance should address all of the topics that build organizational capacity -- organizing, organizational skills, and project skills.

Two basic models for providing assistance to neighborhood organizations were developed by community foundations in the Mott program:

- Community foundation staff personally provides and brokers technical assistance.
- A local organization or individual is funded to plan and operate a program of responsive assistance.

Most community foundations practiced variations of both models simultaneously. And within each model they drew on several assistance sources.

The reason for this is that one provider typically cannot serve all needs. The range of topics is so great, and the cultural and personality "fit" between assistance providers and neighborhood representatives is so important, that a mix of assistance resources works best.

Assistance providers generally come from four categories:

1) **Community foundation staff, Board and Advisory Committee members.** Staff in particular will acquire expertise in organizing and organizational development through on-the-job experience. Board and Advisory Committee members are more likely to have skills for specific neighborhood projects.

2) **Established, experienced neighborhood organizations.** These may be the best source for organizing expertise, and are also highly credible on organizational development issues and specific projects.

3) **Training and assistance centers.** Support centers for nonprofit organizations are found in many communities. University-sponsored, a United Way offshoot, or independent, they are apt to be most useful for organizational development help. Centers specializing in neighborhood affairs, expert in all aspects of capacity building, are less common; if there are none in the local community, there are several active regionally or nationally. Assistance centers also exist for specific issues or projects, for example community gardening or hazardous wastes, as well as for training in community organizing. (A partial listing of resource centers is in Appendix B.)

4) **People from various occupations** will volunteer or sell their specialized expertise. Lawyers will help with by-laws and incorporation; accountants and bookkeepers will help with financial management; developers, builders, bankers, architects, and landscape architects will help with development projects; photographers, writers, computer programmers, and scientists all can be

recruited for specific projects. These resources can be discovered through personal contacts, professional societies, and corporate loaned executive and community affairs programs.

Types of technical assistance

A program of responsive assistance should include individual help for specific grantees and developmental opportunities for groups of neighborhood organizations.

Types of **assistance to individual organizations** include:

- Allowances to grantees to purchase their own technical assistance, or a foundation-managed assistance fund to which they can apply for such a purchase. This gives them considerable choice, and encourages them to shop around in their best interests. A list of approved providers can aid the community foundation as well as neighborhood grantees; developing one could be a project of a neighborhoods workshop.
- Training and assistance plans which are identified in the application preparation process and written into proposals by the organization, or attached by the community foundation as stipulations to the award.
- Assistance by community foundation staff directly to grantees on an on-call basis and as part of ongoing contact with grantees.
- Suggestions of resource people who could help grantees, or arrangements for a grantee to meet with a specific local or national expert at the grantee's request.
- A directory of resources which could be assembled and distributed, listing local (and national) expertise in different organizational, technical, and issue areas.
- Encouragement and financial support for neighborhood residents to attend local, regional, or national meetings or conferences on subjects of importance to their neighborhoods.

Multi-neighborhood assistance includes workshops, conferences, and training programs. There are many topics of common interest -- for example, fundraising, strategic planning, block clubs, crime prevention, and how to research absentee landlords or community investment practices. Training resources can be shared -- these are excellent occasions to bring in an expert from out of town.

These are also excellent opportunities for participating organizations to learn from and get to know each other. Sharing meetings allow neighborhood organizations to compare notes on what has worked effectively for them and what has not.

A few tips for making technical assistance work best:

- Technical assistance works best when it's wanted rather than imposed by the community foundation. At the same time, realize that many organizations won't ask for help, especially when they don't know what would be most helpful. Rather than tell organizations what they need, assistance should help organizations define opportunities for development and suggest possible resources.
- The more choice the neighborhood organization has in choosing its own resources for assistance, the better. With low income neighborhood organizations especially, exercising choice is an opportunity for development.
- While making assistance available is important, groups also deserve space to learn from trial and error. Organizations often cannot absorb well-meaning assistance until they have gotten their feet wet.
- Assistance should be made accessible to those people in the neighborhood organization that will make use of it.
- An educational approach that stresses participation and recognizes participants' own experience works best.
- The resource person must have credibility with the grantee. Someone with direct experience is often most credible, especially to give a few words of expert advice on how to handle a specific situation.

- Continuity and follow-up are essential. A program of continuous assistance is more effective than a one-shot approach if the goal is to learn skills.
- Requiring a fledgling organization to become incorporated, write by-laws, and apply for tax exempt status could exhaust them and divert them from their real reasons for organizing. One should not assume automatically that developing such formal structures is in the best interests of the neighborhood. Staying informal allows a flexibility and range of movement that may be best for some organizations.
- The more involved the community foundation is in providing assistance, the more it will gain. Learning about neighborhood issues and the issues of organizational development at the emerging level works best with first-hand exposure. But don't get more involved than is welcomed!
- Be clear with each grantee about what assistance they can expect and the options available.

Other forms of assistance

In addition to creating learning opportunities, a community foundation can provide other services of particular help to an emerging organization:

- Access to meeting space, to copying machines and office equipment, to software, or to quantity discount purchasing programs.
- Access to pro bono professional services -- lawyers, architects, financial advisors, etc.
- Access to in-kind contributions received by the community foundation (used furniture or office equipment).
- Access to civic leaders and persons of influence.

These types of assistance can be provided at virtually no cost to the community foundation.

From the Mott Files:

Foundation For The Carolinas granted support to the Urban Institute at University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) to provide assistance to all neighborhood grantees. UI acted as fiscal agent, helped grantees plan for use of funds, helped foundation staff review applications, briefed the Advisory Committee on issues, and beginning in Year 3, implemented a neighborhood leadership development program. In Kansas City, the Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance (a nonprofit organization) performed a similar role for the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation.

San Diego Community Foundation gave vouchers for assistance to grantees. Grantees identified the trainer they wanted to hire, or the training program to which they wanted to send residents, and the community foundation paid the cost up to $500 per organization.

Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) made grants to several organizations to provide citywide training and networking. One agency staged workshops on basic organizing and management skills, and compiled a directory listing different neighborhood leaders and the expertise they would share. When that agency revised its mission and stopped offering training in these topics, OCF found another nonprofit consulting firm to continue the workshops. District intermediary organizations for the city's Office of Neighborhood Associations received grants to organize daylong, citywide conferences with out-of-town keynote speakers on topics such as community economic development, or transportation and land use planning.

Arizona Community Foundation secured the pro bono assistance of an attorney to advise a neighborhood organization on its rights to pump and sell water from an aquifer located below the neighborhood.

Encourage the development of local financial support

Low income neighborhood organizations need to develop their capacity to raise and hold funds if they are to survive. Community foundations can help them with this.

Receiving a grant from a community foundation is itself a significant event for a low income neighborhood organization that is highly useful for their own fundraising. Since this grant to an emerging organization may well be their first grant, it signals to the funding community that they have passed the community foundation's review process. The community foundation grant, then, serves as a sort of "seal of approval" and prepares the grantee to take on additional tasks of asset development.

There are three very important ways in which a community foundation can help emerging neighborhood organizations develop their base of financial support.

One is to show to the larger community the community foundation's commitment to low income neighborhoods and their issues. This is done by publicizing the foundation's involvement with low income neighborhood organizations -- in its newsletter, in presentations at meetings of grantmakers, and in other settings to which the community foundation has access that they do not. Highly visible "recognition events" at which the leadership of neighborhood organizations are honored also work well. Both these activities help to legitimize neighborhoods as an active partner in the community's efforts to solve its problems.

A second is to help grantees gain support from other funders. Inform them of funding opportunities, coach them on proposal writing, introduce them to funders, and write letters of support.

A third is to require that neighborhood grantees match their community foundation grant at a certain ratio, perhaps 10%. This is a manageable amount, and they can easily meet it in one or more of these ways:

- Soliciting donations (of money, materials and/or services) from local businesses, business associations, or service organizations.
- Imposing a membership fee or annual dues.
- Staging events, such as spaghetti dinners, garage sales, or talent shows.
- Selling ads in the neighborhood newspaper.
- Securing additional grants or donations.
- Securing city contracts in which neighborhood residents perform certain services (such as clean-up, recycling, citizen input into planning, or job bank recruitment and screening).

If a match is required, keep in mind these caveats, so that the challenge doesn't become more burdensome than supportive:

- The match should be in scale with the group's capacity.
- The procedure should not require recordkeeping that is too detailed or onerous.
- A match requirement will increase (maybe even double) the work to be done by the neighborhood organization. This may slow down progress on the grant project, and should be factored into the community foundation's and neighborhood's expectations of progress.
- Emerging groups may not be helped by a match requirement in the first year of grant support. They may first need to build their confidence, broaden their base, and build their project skills before taking on a fundraising challenge.

From the Mott Files:

The Dayton Foundation advised grantees about which foundations and corporations were likely to be responsive to funding requests.

The Greater Kansas City Community Foundation invited other local foundation representatives to lunch in a neighborhood community center, with presentations and opportunities to meet representatives of four neighborhood organizations. Funders are also invited to the annual ceremony announcing neighborhood grant awards.

The San Diego Community Foundation asked first-time grantees to provide a 10% cash match. Repeat grantees provided that plus an additional 15% which could be either cash or in-kind (expert services, not just members' hours).

Community Foundation of New Jersey followed a progressive sequence to develop its grantees' fundraising abilities. In the first year, the community foundation raised funds on behalf of its neighborhood program, citing specific neighborhood organizations as examples of what the program did. In the second year, the community foundation co-solicited with grantees, obtaining funds earmarked for individual grantees. In the third year, neighborhood groups approached funders on their own, with the community foundation critiquing their proposals and coaching their presentations.

Several neighborhood organizations in the Mott program developed substantial financial support over the course of three or four years. For example, the Crestdale Community Association near Charlotte won incorporation into a neighboring affluent suburb and obtained corporate funding until its treasury surpassed $56,000.

Visibility helps: in Atlantic City, New Jersey, casinos increased their financial support of a neighborhood organization after one of the leaders of the organization received a Presidential volunteer recognition award.

An example of excessive match documentation requirement: in Dayton, neighborhood groups were required to develop advance pledges from individuals for specific tasks (e.g. "I, Joe Smith, 444 Elm Street, will contribute 10 hours to establish a community garden on this block"). After several neighborhood groups pointed out how burdensome and mistrustful this was, the Dayton Foundation dropped it in favor of a more freeform requirement that grantees show evidence of significant resident involvement.

Support cooperation and collaboration among neighborhoods

The issues facing low income neighborhoods are so formidable and the resources so scarce that cooperation and collaboration among neighborhoods should be encouraged.

By joining together, neighborhood organizations can have impact greater than what can be achieved by individual neighborhoods acting alone. They can create larger resource pools and partnerships that benefit the neighborhoods and the larger community. They can better influence public agencies and policies to yield improved services and improved allocation of resources to low income neighborhoods. They can achieve economies of scale. They can train and assist one another, to avoid reinventing the wheel.

Cooperation includes sharing of information and resources. Sponsor meetings of neighborhood organizations to share information on timely topics, develop skills, and strategize. Support the acquisition of copiers, computers, and software that can be used by a number of neighborhood newsletters and publications (but remember that the major benefits will go to the organization holding those resources). Support city-wide coalitions of neighborhood organizations, or city-wide structures that serve or assist neighborhood organizations.

Collaboration means working together on a joint project, and requires coordinated teamwork. Make grants to adjacent neighborhoods that want to work together. Support community initiatives that use neighborhood organizations in partnership with other entities, such as social service agencies or community development corporations.

It is difficult if not counterproductive to impose requirements of cooperation and collaboration on neighborhood organizations. It is perhaps best when grantmaking policies allow it and the program of support encourages it to happen naturally. Convening activities can help neighborhoods overcome their isolation; they can also "target" a particular part of town. Application guidelines can encourage multiple applicants to come in together.

Which is better, to scatter grants across the city or even the region, or to cluster them? The experience of the Mott program does not provide a clear answer. Clustering grants geographically offers the possibility of synergy, so together there is more impact.

On the other hand, if grants are scattered the community foundation gets the advantage of drawing maximum visibility to itself, an asset that can be leveraged to secure additional resources. In addition, more communities are assisted and the foundation may learn more. It might be more fair to broaden the opportunity. There is also the possibility that a single well-placed and well-supported grant can energize surrounding areas. Statewide grantmaking can be difficult to maintain, however, given travel costs and possibly differing cultures.

From the Mott Files:

Citywide conferences draw hundreds in Dayton, Portland, and Kansas City. In Kansas City, presidents of neighborhood organizations met four times to plan the 1987 conference, in addition to forming subcommittees to handle topics, publicity, and other aspects. The conference drew 328 participants from 40 neighborhoods.

Arizona Community Foundation sponsored a statewide neighborhoods conference in 1985. It drew more than 100 participants from across the state, but community foundation staff said the distances between participating communities were too great to sustain meaningful ongoing communication or cooperation.

Through the Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance (KCNA), the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation has supported several initiatives to strengthen ties or share resources among neighborhoods. These have included (a) an intensive neighborhood leadership training program to which 10 neighborhood groups from throughout the city each sent five persons monthly for four months; and (b) a newsletter center available to all neighborhood groups, with training and access to a desktop publishing computer and duplicating and mailing facilities.

Oregon Community Foundation has made several grants to multi-neighborhood coalitions in Portland. For example: (a) the Outer Southeast Coalition of Neighborhoods collaborated to organize residents in six adjacent neighborhoods. Coalition members shared a VISTA volunteer and worked on common concerns such as development of a park out of an abandoned freeway corridor; (b) ten neighborhood boards in Northeast Portland received a joint grant to access the Neighborhood Mediation Service for training in resolving racial, ethnic, and intergenerational conflict.

In Camden (NJ) and Portland, church-based organizing projects have trained neighborhood advocates and built citywide coalitions to press for changes in police deployment and other city policies.

Four neighborhood groups and Habitat for Humanity joined forces in Dayton to form the Dayton View Development Corporation to carry out housing initiatives on behalf of neighborhood residents.

Foundation For The Carolinas nurtures a climate of cooperation among neighborhoods by sponsoring several joint functions annually: conference, retreat, awards dinner, and "Neighborhood of the Year" competition.

The case for multi-year support

A program of small grants and assistance to emerging low income neighborhood organizations will be most supportive and most productive when there is opportunity for multi-year support.

There are two reasons for this. One, the development of capacity, stability, and effectiveness of these organizations takes time. Two, the implementation of useful projects such that the gains build on each other takes time. Both of these are perhaps doubly true when the efforts are all-volunteer.

But remember that the program's focus is only partly on successful project execution. It's also on developing ever-improving neighborhood

organizations' capacity to respond effectively to local problems. Developing this capacity requires that organizations learn how to build on small successes, for one project to lead to another, for seemingly insignificant projects to lead to more significant, and for a fragile, emerging organization to become a more stable, multi-purpose or multi-issue organization. This developmental process goes on for more than a year; it's long term.

Why does such progress take so long for emerging low income neighborhood organizations?

- All-volunteer efforts take time, especially in low income neighborhoods, which have more single-parent families and persons facing personal stress. Volunteering on a sustained basis is more difficult. Providing child care at neighborhood meetings helps lower this barrier.
- Low income neighborhoods are less richly endowed with resident professional skills that help to improve conditions: lawyers, planners, and architects, for example. Locating pro bono or low cost services from professionals may be a high priority.
- Emerging low income neighborhood organizations are typically not well-oiled machines. There are no standard operating procedures for implementing the purposes of the grant. Confusion in the start-up phase is common.
- Technical assistance creates dynamics of its own, which take time even though they're a valid part of the organization's learning experience.
- Perhaps most important, low income neighborhood groups face issues which are difficult to solve. Eliminating crime or drug abuse is a formidable goal. Stemming housing deterioration means reversing trends that may be 30 years old. Neighborhood organizations therefore must develop capacities so that they can achieve the momentum needed to secure additional resources and stage a meaningful response to local problems.

Multi-year support is better able to accommodate the above realities. Community foundation staff (and advisory or distribution committees) may become frustrated with the seemingly slow pace of growth and the sometimes transitory nature of gains. Growth can be slow and painful.

Sometimes good performance is difficult to notice, but careful monitoring can reveal sufficient potential to warrant continuation. Community foundations in the Mott program developed considerable skills in discerning legitimate or purposeful movement from chaotic or destructive movement.

But don't be content with tiny steps for too long. Continuation grants should be based on evidence that the organization is increasing in capacity, that members are developing their organizational skills, and/or that they have developed longer-range plans and more varied agenda.

In short, the best program of support for low income neighborhood organizations will find ways to support them in imagining, and then enacting, a series of activities that will add up to a focused and ever-strengthened attack on their issues.

From the Mott Files:

Beacon Hills Association in Kansas City worked for three years to convert an abandoned house into a community center. Tasks included identifying such a center as a group goal, finding a suitable property, finding the owners, and negotiating a sale on affordable terms. Once they had title, the group scrounged rehabilitation materials and sought and organized volunteers to do the rehab work. Additional community foundation minigrants in the two years after the building was renovated enabled the Association to present growing numbers of classes in minor home repair: first for local residents, then students at a nearby high school (with academic credit), then interested persons from other neighborhoods. Beacon Hills has emerged as a citywide resource on home maintenance and the links between community organizing and property improvement. The center also is used for meetings and fundraising and social events.

From the Mott Files:

Green Island Residents Group in Worcester worked seven years to organize a senior citizens housing project. It took that long to work with the City Council, city officials, the local housing authority, state legislators, the state community development office, and the development team before breaking ground.

To staff or not to staff

Whether or not neighborhood-based organizations should have paid staff is a controversial topic among neighborhood supporters. There are pros and cons to both sides.

Advantages of all-volunteer organizations

- **Lower financial overhead.** Staff salaries add thousands (usually tens of thousands) of dollars to an organization's annual budget. Without the pressure of fundraising salaries, the organization has breathing room to focus on what will improve the neighborhood instead of what will bring money into the organization.
- **Greater control by members.** When there is no staff, it's obvious that volunteer members and officers control the organization. It's clearly theirs, instead of possibly serving some staff person or funder. Goals and activities reflect members' concerns, not staff concerns.
- **Greater volunteer activism.** This is not always true, but it can be. Volunteers may be more active knowing that if they don't do things, things won't get done. This builds the neighborhood's self-help capacity since skills, contacts, and confidence reside in permanent residents, not staff who are more likely to leave. Residents are the experts and leaders. An all-volunteer organization may develop greater teamwork skills, too, by using more people to share the load. The most successful organizations offer meaningful opportunities to exercise leadership and make things happen.
- **Less competition between neighborhood organizations for scarce funding dollars.** There is probably never enough funding available in a community for every neighborhood organization to be fully staffed. Doing without staff frees organizations to cooperate with one another without worrying about looking better than the other to funders. It even encourages them to join forces to maximize their greatest strength: their members' abilities.

Disadvantages of all-volunteer organizations

- **Things get done more slowly.** Fewer projects are taken on, and they advance more slowly. This is because volunteers have fewer hours available to work for the organization. Volunteers also often lack skills (in organizing, management or project/issue areas) that staff are likely to have. It's like doing carpentry with hand tools instead of power tools -- possible, but slower and more laborious.
- **Projects are more likely to be sidetracked.** Volunteers are more likely to set aside the organization's work when other pressures arise in their life. Paid staff will make the work a higher priority and provide continuity.
- **Participants may "burn out."** Too much responsibility and work, and too little progress and reward, will cause people to get tired and withdraw.
- **A slow pace can cause a downward spiral**, just as success builds its own momentum. If people can't sense that progress is being made and they stop working, progress becomes even slower. If the organization acquires a "do-nothing" reputation, new people will not join and potential allies will not invest aid, dooming the group to ineffectiveness and irrelevance.

Advantages of staff

- **More work-time is available to the organization.** Staff boosts the quantity of person-time available dramatically. For example, an organization that had 8 volunteers each putting in 5 hours a week would be an active organization; but one full-time staff person would double that organization's active person-hours.

More weekday work can be done. Staff can make the daytime contacts of city staff, businesses, churches and others so that those entities become resources instead of obstacles or bystanders to neighborhood goals. This is often difficult for volunteers who have daytime jobs of their own.

- **The organization gains visibility and accessibility.** Other people know who to call when they want to reach the organization, and that staff person is always there to answer the phone or return messages. A staff person provides a good multipurpose entry point into the organization since (s)he usually has an overview of the organization's many activities, projects, and committees; callers don't have to remember which volunteer to call about which activity or issue. Reaching the organization becomes a simple matter of calling one number, one person.
- **Staff may have skills and knowledge that are valuable to the organization.** By dint of training and experience, staff often have considerable expertise in organizing, management, and project activities. They can do things for the organization, and they can lead and train volunteers to speed the development of the organization and the accomplishment of its goals.
- **Staff can catalyze increased volunteer involvement.** Staff can speed up progress so that it's more visible and dramatic to volunteers and the community, encouraging them to get involved and stay involved. Staff support reduces the personal costs to volunteers of getting things done.

Disadvantages of staff

- **Staff can dominate an organization.** They are in a position to shape the organization's agenda and strategies to serve their interests and protect their jobs. And volunteers often defer to staff's judgment and expertise. To prevent this, indigenous leaders must know how to supervise staff -- a set of skills that may take time to acquire.
- **Staff are expensive.** A staffed organization is forced to do more fundraising which can distract from work on the organization's agenda. This need for funds can pressure organizations to pursue funders' interests rather than their own; or at least to pursue short-term, highly visible results -- the kind that will win funding -- regardless of whether those results reflect the organization's (and community's) goals.
- **Staff presence can cause volunteer capacity to wither.** People often become inactive and let staff do it. ("After all, it's their job. I'm just a volunteer.") Some staff find it easier to do things themselves than to recruit, train, and supervise volunteers to do them, especially when inexperienced volunteers are slower and make more mistakes. This strategy is practical in the short-term, perhaps, but not in the long-term for the neighborhood.

The bottom line

In the final analysis, for an organization to continue to grow in its capacity to make things happen, at some point it probably must take on staff. But it's important that staff *supplement* member activity, not *displace* it; and *support* elected leadership, not *lead* it.

An organization probably should not take on staff until indigenous leadership has the financial and fundraising skills to handle the increased load on the organization's budget. The presence of staff will change the organization's operating style, and an organization that takes on staff should be prepared for a transitional period while the board makes the transition from day-to-day voluntarism to policy setting and staff supervision and support.

The bottom line is that staffing makes sense in certain situations, and we suggest that grantmaking guidelines not preclude it.

From the Mott Files:

Where do staff come from? In the Mott program, many organizations hired local residents who were already active members -- often the president -- to take on staff responsibilities. This was true in Kansas City's Washington Wheatley Neighborhood Association, for example, and Arizona's Hopeville Community for Progress.

From the Mott Files:

Often these staff members were not exactly paid salaries; "stipend" more accurately described the compensation of $1000 to $5000 they received for what was sometimes full-time work. And if the organization's income fell short, the stipend might be scaled back.

Some organizations took advantage of internship programs such as VISTA or church-sponsored volunteer service programs to provide staff for a few months or a year. In some cases, such as that of Oregon's Brooklyn Action Corps, the organization was able to hire a local resident as their VISTA volunteer for a year. That worked out very well; she continued to be active as a member after her VISTA term expired.

There can be a downside to hiring a neighborhood resident, especially someone who has been active as a leader or volunteer: that familiarity with the neighborhood and the organization can make it difficult for that person, and board members, to adjust to their new roles and new professional relationship with each other.

In the Mott program, staff were usually generalists. They worked on outreach, organizing, planning, recordkeeping, advocacy, and projects -- all the major functions of the organization.

CHAPTER ♦ FOUR

Expanding the Community Foundation's Capacities

A strong neighborhoods program by its very nature strengthens a community foundation. Both neighborhood organizations and community foundations are strengthened by increases in these capacities: capacity to catalyze community action, to marshall financial and other resources to impact a community concern, to connect with decisionmakers and opinion leaders, and to exert community leadership.

This chapter describes how a community foundation's capacities are enlarged as it moves to enlarge its neighborhoods' capacities.

Attracting funds for a neighborhood grantmaking program

In the Mott program, participating community foundations received major support from the Mott Foundation for minigrants and technical assistance. However, participants were required to match Mott funds by raising a portion of the grant pool themselves.

Fund development

Participating community foundations discovered that funds for a neighborhood grantmaking program can come from many sources. A prioritized list would include:

- City or county government
- Local private foundations
- Corporate giving programs
- Banks and insurance companies
- Individual donors
- Business associations
- Chambers of commerce

While attracting funds may take a substantial amount of staff time, this investment pays unexpected dividends. It is an opportunity for the community foundation to position itself in a niche that's all-too-uncrowded. A community foundation that becomes an expert in neighborhood level activity can quickly become a resource to other, more traditional funders in town.

Fundraising for a neighborhoods grants program gives the community foundation an opportunity to educate funders about (a) the need to support citizen participation problem-solving at the neighborhood level, (b) the role of emerging neighborhood organizations as partners with traditional organizations in the tasks of community building, and (c) a neighborhoods program as a good example of what discretionary funds can do.

There are many rationales a community foundation can use to position itself between the charitable interests of a community's private, corporate, and individual donors and its low income neighborhoods:

- Community foundations have a uniquely public mandate. They exist to serve the public interest more clearly than do private, corporate, or individual funders.
- A community foundation is *expected* to know the city and the issues facing its low income residents, and to have access to emerging neighborhood organizations.
- A community foundation can save institutional or individual funders from time-consuming work. Community foundation representatives will visit stressed and often threatening neighborhoods, make distributions, and manage grants and grantee relations on behalf of other funders.
- Contributing to a community foundation's neighborhoods grants program is an attractive way for private, corporate and individual donors to care about neighborhoods. They can remain as distant from the program as they'd like, or perhaps take a close-up view from the advisory committee.

Additional arguments can be used with specific funding sources to increase their support for neighborhood organizations. For example, a neighborhood that knows how to seek resident input, to plan and to make decisions is a major community resource. It can be a resource to the city in the performance of city responsibilities. It can be a resource to traditional service delivery agencies in the development and provision of valuable services.

Some developers have learned to be allies to neighborhood organizations to help them build in ways that serve the needs of the neighborhood as well as the larger community. Property development often fails -- even when performed by community development corporations -- because of insufficient attention or access to resident interests, needs and preferences. A viable resident organizational infrastructure greatly aids the chances of success with expensive community development projects.

Banks or other businesses with headquarters or major plants in transitional neighborhoods can benefit from better relations with those neighborhoods and from improvement of their living conditions.

Small businesses in or near a neighborhood can benefit from improved economic health and purchasing power of its residents. Clean-up campaigns and home rehab projects can bring in substantial business. "Buy local" campaigns, sponsored by neighborhood organizations in partnership with local businesses, improve the local economy.

Fundraising that focuses on specific neighborhoods or specific projects allows use of the sharpest "hooks" -- contributors have the clearest idea of what they're supporting.

A community foundation can create its own challenge program. It can challenge the community by putting up some of its own discretionary money to match incoming contributions. Another approach is to put up its own staff time in return for donations towards grantmaking. Still another is to put up its own discretionary money for grantmaking in return for staff support.

Media interest can greatly improve the climate for fund development. Media interest can be stimulated with press releases around public events such as grant awards, neighborhood group activity, or special recognition events.

Funds

A community foundation can take financial support for low income neighborhood organizations into its discretionary fund or into a neighborhoods field-of-interest fund. Either option is desirable.

Channeling donations into the discretionary fund offers the most flexibility to the community foundation. This also reduces the appearance of competition with its grantees that can occur in field-of-interest fundraising.

A fund for neighborhoods is attractive to donors who want to be sure that their money goes to neighborhoods. It provides visibility and continuity for the neighborhoods program, and lodges it more securely within the community foundation. A disadvantage is the extra accounting involved for the community foundation -- although community foundations are certainly accustomed to managing multiple accounts.

From the Mott Files:

Greater Kansas City Community Foundation made very specific appeals for its Neighborhood Small Grants Fund. It created a brochure specifically for the fund (with the theme, "Make the Most of Neighborhood Funding -- Make a Difference in Kansas City") and visited local foundations and corporate giving programs to solicit support. One year the Community Foundation invited other local funding representatives -- current and prospective neighborhood funders -- to a lunch and presentation by four neighborhood organization representatives in a low income neighborhood's community center. The Community Foundation also seeded the Fund with $10,000 or more of its own discretionary money annually. These efforts generated $50,000 -- $100,000 per year for the Fund from corporations, private foundations and trusts, the City, and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation.

The Foundation For The Carolinas secured support from NCNB (formerly North Carolina National Bank) by presenting its neighborhoods grant program as a vehicle by which the bank could live out its marketing motto, "The best bank in the neighborhood."

The New Jersey Community Foundation raised money (in the first year of the program) in each of the six New Jersey cities in which it sponsored neighborhood activity. Service organizations and chambers of commerce as well as locally headquartered major corporations contributed to the program. In subsequent years, those funders contributed directly to their local neighborhood organization.

Partnerships with city/county government

Many interests of neighborhoods and of local government are compatible. Both want to see a high quality of life, decent housing stock, adequate job opportunities, good public health, safe streets, sufficient recreational opportunities, etc.

These common interests lead readily to collaboration between the community foundation and local government, and between neighborhood organizations and local government.

Local government and the community foundation

For community foundations in the Mott program, their relationship with local government was the one that grew most dramatically.

In the earliest stages of a neighborhoods grant program, city agencies and officials can provide information of great value to the community foundation -- about income levels in different neighborhoods, about existing neighborhood organizations, and about city resources available to neighborhoods for different activities. The community foundation may create a useful role for itself as a bridge, passing information and expertise along to neighborhood groups.

But then, as the community foundation's program matures, the community foundation develops expertise about low income neighborhoods that can be useful to the city. The community foundation can share its new-found expertise on how to work with these kinds of groups. It can advise the city on neighborhood or other program initiatives that involve neighborhoods, as can the neighborhood organizations themselves.

If at all possible, include one or two city representatives on the neighborhoods program advisory committee. This allows government officials to become more familiar with low income neighborhoods but in less official ways, and lets them put their resources to optimum use in the neighborhoods. City representation in the program also confers greater legitimacy to the program, to the community foundation, and to neighborhoods -- funded and not funded.

Local government can have many reasons for financially supporting a neighborhoods grants program operated by a community foundation:

- City government may not have its own neighborhoods program, and may welcome this opportunity to support one at relatively low cost and administrative commitment.
- An existing city government program may not include emerging neighborhood organizations, or it may not sufficiently target low income neighborhood organizations.
- The community foundation's process for application review, community input, neighborhood relations, grant administration, and technical assistance may be preferred or more convenient than the government's own.
- Community foundations can manage smaller grants than many cities' own contracting procedures allow. The city can make one $30,000 grant to the community foundation and rely on the community foundation to distribute it effectively among neighborhood groups.
- Neighborhoods in which there is leadership and residents committed to neighborhood improvement are resources to city departments whose work is adversely affected by neighborhood apathy. Active, effective neighborhood organizations make the city "look good."

From the Mott Files:

Three city departments are represented in the Dayton Foundation's neighborhood advisory committee: Human and Neighborhood Resources, Planning, and Housing Development. The city also puts money into the community foundation's Neighbor to Neighbor fund. City involvement in the advisory committee is so great that endorsement of an action or policy move by the advisory committee almost constitutes city endorsement.

In Kansas City, the city became a funding partner after the program was well-established, when they saw that the program was a way to work effectively in neighborhoods. However, one year the city's money came with too many strings: it would only reimburse certain direct expenses by neighborhood groups, with extensive paperwork required. It became a big headache for the community foundation and the neighborhood groups, and the reimbursement program was dropped after a year. Moral: keep it simple.

Local government and low income neighborhood organizations

Local government has major resources and services that can help neighborhoods. Many of the items on a low income neighborhood group's agenda concern gaining a more equitable share of those resources and services -- to improve health and safety, reduce crime, increase recreational facilities, upgrade public works (sewer, water, sidewalks), improve educational and employment opportunities, improve the housing stock, and remove poisons from the air, water, and ground. These are traditional areas of public responsibility.

Receiving financial support from a neighborhoods grants program, especially one that has the attention of the city, allows for greater cooperation between the neighborhood organization and city officials. Most local governments in the communities participating in the Mott program found it easier to work with a neighborhood organization than not to. The cooperation with neighborhood groups helped government officials do their job, and made them look good at the same time.

Just as city government can help neighborhoods, so can neighborhood organizations be allies of city government. Citizen crime prevention programs supplement police resources. Clean-up drives and recycling programs assist the Sanitation Department. Neighborhood organizations' input into program and funding decisions can improve operations of parks, libraries, and schools, as well as capital improvements. Block nurses, who provide low cost, preventive care on their blocks, ease the strain on hospitals and the Public Health Department. Neighborhood organizations can be sites for job training and adult education programs, and can assist with housing rehabilitation and new development programs.

Community foundations can help nurture all these partnerships, playing convenor and catalyst as circumstances permit.

In some cities, local government and neighborhoods have a history of confrontation over control of resources. There are many philosophies about whether confrontation or cooperation works best, but a community foundation can help break through orthodoxies, allowing each side to recognize the legitimate interests of the other and negotiate from there.

From the Mott Files:

In Atlantic City (NJ), Worcester, and Dayton, public housing projects provide office and meeting space to tenant and neighborhood organizations.

United Passaic Organization in New Jersey is the official liaison between the city of Passaic and residents and merchants in the multiblock East Side Redevelopment Project.

A neighborhood organization in San Diego convinced the School Board to consider resident input into the redesign of the school's playground. In Trenton, New Jersey, the Latino Community Land Trust has acquired title to several abandoned buildings from the city and is rehabilitating them for affordable housing, a laundromat, and other neighborhood services.

The Land Trust and the city are also cooperating to revive a neighborhood park: the city contributed new playground equipment and the Land Trust is staffing and maintaining the park.

In most cities, most of the neighborhood organizations come into frequent contact with city agencies. In Charlotte, for example, city agencies supply trucks for the spring cleanup, equipment for playgrounds, training for job skills, planning for vacant lots, concrete for sidewalks, testing of waste, and more.

The Foundation For The Carolinas helped a rural neighborhood acquire municipal sewer and water service. Interestingly, it happened when a member of the Neighborhood Advisory Committee found himself seated next to a member of the County Public Works Commission at a meeting of still another organization, and mentioned the need to him.

Portland's Office of Neighborhood Associations (ONA) staff help Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) staff review grant proposals. ONA district offices act as fiscal agents for several neighborhood grantees; they also help neighborhood associations apply for community foundation grants, and provide a variety of training and technical assistance. OCF staff are in regular contact with all levels of ONA staff, as well as several other city departments.

Linkages with private foundations and corporate giving programs

Since the issues of neighborhoods are inextricably bound to most other areas of private grantmaking (education, health, human services, arts, economic development, public affairs, and environmental issues), the community foundation that learns how to harness the power of neighborhoods can find itself involved in new ways in these fields, often as a funding partner.

Community foundations should use their regional association of grantmakers to publicize their activities, educate other funders on the issues of low income neighborhoods, and inform them of opportunities in which they can play a constructive role.

Private foundations can fund a number of support functions useful to the neighborhoods grant program: background research on the needs of neighborhoods, technical assistance expenses, workshops or advice provided by national experts -- even for staffing the program at the community foundation.

The interests and pursuits of individual neighborhood grantees can also draw a community foundation into partnerships with private and corporate funders, both local and national.

Community foundations will want to take part in the Neighborhood Funders Affinity Group, affiliated with the Council on Foundations. This national network includes private, corporate, and community foundations that are supporting neighborhood-based initiatives.

From the Mott Files:

In San Diego, the community foundation joined with the Irvine Foundation and the Parker Foundation to devise "a grant strategy which might have a wide impact on neighborhood development in San Diego." The community foundation's first neighborhoods program officer was subsequently hired with private foundation support.

Greater Worcester Community Foundation received matching funds for its neighborhoods program for four years from the Stoddard Charitable Foundation. When the Mott program ended, Stoddard agreed to be a funding partner with the community foundation in another five-year grant program for neighborhood organizations.

From the Mott Files:

Community foundations in Worcester, New Jersey, Kansas City and the Carolinas have become known as "the grassroots experts" and have been called on to make recommendations to private foundations about specific neighborhood organizations that have sought private support.

As part of a court settlement, the Bank of America is contributing to a special fund in the San Diego Community Foundation to provide low- and no-interest loans to community-based development groups to develop low income housing.

In Passaic, New Jersey, the United Passaic Organization (UPO) wanted their teenagers to stay in school, stay off drugs, and move successfully into the adult working world. They developed a "Passport Awarded for Staying in School" (PASS) plan providing neighborhood and corporate mentors, and post-graduation career-track jobs, to help students meet academic and attendance goals. With Community Foundation of New Jersey minigrant and staff assistance, UPO enlisted the Passaic and Paterson school systems as partners, along with a bank president who in turn brought in other corporate leaders. Eventually the Gannett Corporation came in with $181,000 in support over two years.

Arizona Community Foundation's (ACF) experience with its neighborhood minigrants program led to an invitation from the Ford Foundation's SEEDCO program to put together a community economic development partnership in Phoenix. ACF brought together the City of Phoenix, Chicanos Por La Causa (a community development corporation), various corporate financial contributors, SEEDCO, a hospital, and a local neighborhood organization to redevelop a deteriorated section of South Phoenix.

Linkages with other institutions

As neighborhood groups define their priorities and pursue their goals, the actively involved community foundation will be brought into contact and sometimes into an ongoing relationship with a variety of other institutions.

Some of these will be explicitly neighborhood -serving institutions: nonprofit training and assistance centers, and national networks such as the National Neighborhood Coalition and Neighborhoods USA.[1]

Others are concerned with "livable cities" and "quality of life," such as Partners for Livable Places. Still others deal with affordable housing issues, such as Habitat for Humanity and the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Others, such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation, deal with preserving historic structures and areas.

Regional and national community organizing training institutes can serve both community foundation and neighborhood organizations' leaders and staff.

Several national and local church and religious organizations have programs of support for low income neighborhoods. In some cities, coalitions of churches sponsor organizing and self-help efforts in low income neighborhoods. Or churches in affluent parts of town "adopt" poor churches or poor neighborhoods, and provide cash and volunteer labor to various neighborhood projects. Hopefully these charitable efforts also contribute increased capacity for self-determination to the host neighborhood.

Institutions of higher learning often have departments or centers concerned with urban and community affairs. Their resources may include computers, access to research data, staff knowledgeable in issues affecting neighborhoods, students dedicated to community work, and access to courses or special sessions of interest. When engaging these resources, be careful that neighborhoods do not become "laboratories" or victims of intrusive assignments.

1 See Appendix B for addresses of institutions mentioned in this section.

Cultivate reporters in the print and electronic media who can report on neighborhood issues. City newspapers often have "neighborhood" or "community" sections.

United Ways typically support service delivery agencies in low income neighborhoods, and are active in health and welfare issues affecting residents. United Ways could encourage their member agencies to collaborate with and support neighborhood organizations whose purposes are to improve living conditions through resident initiatives.

Outreach for literacy tutoring, for example, can be done by neighborhood organizations with support from service agencies, as could meals-on-wheels or home care efforts. Conversely, the intimate knowledge that active neighbors have of their neighborhood can be useful to agency staff.

United Ways might also modify their guidelines so that neighborhood organizations are eligible for ongoing support. A recent United Way of America experimental initiative is intended to support affordable housing development by community-based nonprofit organizations. The modern issue of homelessness is one for which neighborhood organizations, service delivery agencies, and community development corporations could be parts of a comprehensive solution strategy.

The whole range of national and local organizations serving minority populations, as well as those devoted to issue advocacy have potential for productive relationships with neighborhoods programs.

From the Mott Files:

In Passaic, New Jersey, after a fire damaged much of the East Side neighborhood, the National Trust for Historic Preservation provided restoration advice.

Community foundations in Dayton, Arizona, and Oregon called in experts from the Center for Community Change to speak to neighborhoods conferences or consult with specific neighborhood groups.

United Ways and community foundations worked toward, or at least discussed the issue of, supporting neighborhood-based activity in most cities of the Mott program, especially Phoenix, Kansas City, Dayton, Charlotte, and Worcester.

Habitat for Humanity has joined with several Dayton neighborhood groups to form a community development corporation dedicated to generating affordable low income housing for neighborhood residents. Habitat for Humanity helped residents in one Charlotte neighborhood to construct 28 homes.

Local universities provide assistance in planning, organizational development, fiscal management, survey design, and other topics to neighborhood groups in Charlotte, Dayton, Arizona, and Portland.

Members of Tucsonans for a Clean Environment, a community group formed to clean up groundwater pollution, established links with the national Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes and with Arizona public health agencies.

Broadening the base of support

As neighborhood grantees develop a record of accomplishment and involvement, additional opportunities for broadening the base of support for neighborhood issues and neighborhood activities present themselves. That base will grow in different directions depending on the issues with which the neighborhoods are involved.

Community foundations can be a catalyst for these base-broadening moves by continually educating the community about the potential of neighborhoods to act on a wide range of issues. Remember that neighborhood activism cuts across issues in surprising ways, and supporters may be discovered in unexpected places!

Build a supportive network for neighborhoods -- similar to an advisory committee but more informal. It should include all the people and institutions who are interested in seeing the community be vital and strong at all levels.

Ideally it would include everyone with a civic agenda: elected officials; city, county, and community agencies interested in anything that goes on in neighborhoods; corporations and institutions, particularly those with a stake in the well-being of a certain location or population; all media outlets found in neighborhoods; service organizations with memberships in low income neighborhoods; and nonprofit and philanthropic organizations with activities that affect (or should affect) low income neighborhoods.

This is obviously a large number of people, and not all will be included on a neighborhoods program mailing list. But the *possibility* of such a large list suggests the extensive connections that low income neighborhoods have with the rest of the city. A truly supportive neighborhoods grants program nurtures these connections.

Knitting a supportive network is mainly a matter of opening communication links:

- Send communiques to announce grant awards, program actions, and grantee accomplishments.
- Don't assume that everyone is in the same information loop. When news affecting neighborhoods is received, circulate it among grantees.
- Create occasions when people can learn about neighborhoods: neighborhood tours, local festivals, year-end banquets, and conferences or speaker events.
- Arrange introductory meetings between neighborhood spokespeople and other key people.
- Make use of unofficial occasions to promote the work of neighborhoods. Conversations at social occasions -- from receptions to conversations in the elevator -- really help to expand the network.
- Discover what resources different institutions have, and think of how and with whom they might be shared.
- Promote and extend the "career ladder" of neighborhood activists, so as to reward and legitimize this line of community work.

Neighborhoods can also be brought into existing supportive networks. For example, neighborhood spokespeople can be invited to speak before the regional association of grantmakers, at professional meetings, or at the community foundation's Board or distribution committee meetings. There is seldom anyone as authoritative on issues of city livability as neighborhood leaders.

From the Mott Files:

Oregon Community Foundation hosted a Grantmakers Forum featuring the director of the National Congress for Community Economic Development.

The Urban Institute at University of North Carolina at Charlotte created a slide show featuring the neighborhoods it assists. San Diego Community Foundation sponsored a town hall series featuring discussion of issues facing the city's neighborhoods, videotaped for broadcast on the local PBS station. The Dayton Foundation devoted an issue of its newsletter to its neighborhoods program.

The program officer of the Community Foundation of New Jersey made presentations about their neighborhoods program, highlighting projects of specific grantees, to service clubs around the state.

Effects on the community foundation

A community foundation that takes a neighborhoods program to heart can expect to be changed in important ways. Perspectives from low income neighborhoods will supplement and balance familiar sources of information. The resources and talents residing in low income neighborhoods and their institutions will provide alternatives to the conventional need-based "me provider, you recipient" orientation of most human service programs. The community foundation will learn how to tackle problems with citizens' skills as well as professionals'.

A neighborhoods program has great overlap with topical themes of education, health, arts, etc. Working in these areas through neighborhood groups offers positive, creative approaches to community building. To maximize this creative potential, the community foundation should

integrate people with a neighborhoods perspective into other areas of community foundation activity:

- Send Requests For Proposals in different program areas to neighborhood organizations, as well as to agencies.
- Invite neighborhood leaders into the committee structure of the community foundation -- advisory committees on issue areas, the distributions committee, or the Board itself.
- Invite neighborhood spokespeople to planning sessions on issue areas that affect them.

A neighborhoods grants program may lead a community foundation to retool features of other grantmaking programs to benefit from features outlined in this guidebook: community advisory mechanisms, active networking, small grants, emerging organizations, and grantee relations that include assistance, referral, and encouragement as well as financial support.

Is there any backlash?

Do neighborhood-supporting community foundations get embroiled in controversy? After all, neighborhood organizations work toward a redistribution of resources.

The experience of the Mott program was that the fear of conflict far outstripped the reality. In eight communities over five years, no one ever called a participating community foundation and said, "We're mad at your program," or "We're mad at you for funding this neighborhood project."

Actually, confrontational tactics at the neighborhood level are not very widespread, though they are still feared as a legacy of an earlier time and occasionally they still are necessary. This program has shown the success of cooperative styles, of community organizing that secures city services without upheaval.

A community foundation can manage the risk of conflict by letting control reside with the neighborhood organizations. Make clear, if necessary, that the community foundation is not controlling activities at the neighborhood level. Grantees are funded to develop their own positions. The community foundation can disavow particular positions of its grantees while supporting the authentic community-based process for taking that position.

Remember, there is traditionally a distinction made between the funder and the activities of the grant recipient. Neither the success nor the failure of experimental surgery redounds to the funder, and when the local symphony plays a particularly good program, the funder seldom gets the credit.

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CHAPTER ♦ FIVE

Neighborhood Projects on a Shoestring

Projects supported by a neighborhoods small grants program will vary as widely as the issues facing neighborhoods today.

Each community foundation in the Mott program made grants for a variety of projec's. Most could be grouped into nine areas, listed here in general order of increasing sophistication:

- Neighborhood identity and pride
- Clean-up and physical improvements
- Communication and marketing
- Crime prevention
- Neighborhood facilities development
- Planning
- Environmental protection
- Youth involvement and development
- Housing

These areas are often interrelated. A youth involvement project may address crime, housing or clean-up concerns. Planning projects may develop strategies to boost neighborhood identity and protect the environment. Communications projects may share information about all issues affecting a neighborhood.

Minigrants can support these different types of projects by paying for materials, operating costs, and/or staff. Often minigrants are combined with assistance from other sources.

Hallmarks of successful projects

The best projects, whatever their goal or focus, have two preconditions and two outcomes in common.

Preconditions for successful projects are (1) popular support by neighborhood residents (i.e., the project addresses a significant local problem in a way that is acceptable to local residents) and (2) feasibility, given the time and resources available.

Popular support ensures that the project will strengthen the organization's standing with residents. Feasibility means the project is likely to be accomplished, and the mere fact of accomplishment generates confidence and satisfaction almost independent of what is accomplished.

Outcomes of the most successful projects include (1) a tangible benefit produced for the neighborhood and (2) increased capacity in the neighborhood to do more projects and take on more issues.

Remember, the overall goal is not just to perform a service or provide a resource, but to build a strong, popularly supported organization capable of really changing things in the neighborhood. Providing a service or resource -- i.e. conducting a project -- contributes toward that end by (a) establishing credibility for the organization and (b) providing opportunities to develop organizational capacities that can be used again.

Projects offer experiential learning of organizational skills: how to recruit, involve and share decision making with other people; how to design and manage timelines and budgets; how to fundraise; how to keep records; how to enlist external resources. If organizations make a habit of reflecting on their projects to note what they learned in them and how their next projects can build on that learning, the organizational development process will go even more quickly.

Examples of projects

On the following page are some examples from the Mott files of projects in the nine areas listed above, to illustrate what minigrants can support.

Neighborhood identity and pride

There were two basic types of identity and pride projects: markers and events. Both are good for calling attention to the neighborhood, calling attention to opportunities for getting involved, and helping residents identify with the neighborhood.

These are typically "starter projects" in neighborhoods where the consciousness about neighborhood self-help potential is low. In doing the organizing of these simple projects, neighborhood leaders can learn about other issues that residents regard as pressing. People can get to know each other better, too.

In the Mott program, several neighborhoods erected brick, stone or wood markers bearing the neighborhood's name at key entry points into their neighborhoods. Others created smaller metal signs and mounted them on signposts at all entry points.

Events included festivals and dinners. These provided entertainment, food, a chance to play and perform, and opportunities for multicultural and multigenerational mingling -- occasions for neighbors to be together, and for a neighborhood to invite the rest of the city to visit in a safe, nonthreatening way. They were also occasions to honor people, celebrate accomplishments, and raise funds. They might include fundraising booths and concessions for the neighborhood organization and other local service groups, and sidewalk and yard sales for residents and merchants. Some included walking tours of homes, gardens and other sights; others included parades.

For marker projects, grants typically paid for materials, and for prizes or stipends for designers and builders. In festivals and dinners, grants paid for banners, flyers, brochures, entertainment, refreshments, equipment, and sometimes organizers' stipends.

Clean-up and physical improvements

These projects are excellent for developing skills and results as well as pride. Everyone sees tangible results -- those inside the neighborhood as well as those outside. A cleaned up neighborhood attracts investments by others. It attracts more viable businesses and residents. It attracts home ownership commitments. It generally makes residents feel better about where they live.

In addition, clean-up activities are ones that most everyone can do. It takes some organizing, especially if the effort is to be done on a particular day or weekend. But it's fairly easy to get cooperation from city agencies, particularly those that remove garbage and waste, and these efforts help establish links between the neighborhood organization and different city agencies and elected officials.

Beautification and fix-up efforts can be opportunities for skill building, especially in home repair work, landscaping, and gardening. It's the sort of effort for which volunteers can be cultivated and then recognized.

One difficulty with these types of projects, as well as with the above identity and pride projects, is that they tend to be short-term. It's best if the organization has another project ready to build on the successes of this project, i.e., one that uses the volunteers and organizing skills, the pride and momentum of residents. To do only an annual clean-up has clear but limited benefits to the organization and the neighborhood.

In the Mott program, physical improvement projects included clean-up days that mobilized people to pick up, sweep, rake, and mow together, with coordinated rubbish removal by municipal garbage trucks or even the National Guard.

Some neighborhood associations conducted concentrated beautification of one or a few targeted properties, boulevards or commercial strips. Often these tapped "model block" or "paintathon" programs (offering money, materials and/or volunteers) sponsored by corporations, city departments, and religious and service organizations.

Fix-up projects included organizing ongoing maintenance of vacant yards and sidewalks or of frail seniors' property -- jointly buying mowers and blowers, and recruiting people to do various chores. Sometimes local teenagers performed chores for modest wages. Tool lending libraries also helped people maintain their own properties. A few associations organized recycling programs or promoted city recycling efforts.

Community gardens were another popular physical improvement project that nurtured relationships and skills in organizing and cooperation as well as gardening.

Code compliance campaigns encouraged owners to maintain their properties. Some organizations' members went door to door to encourage property owners to make repairs, informing them of code requirements and of resources available to help. These resources ranged from tool libraries and low-interest loans to grants and free weatherization. Other organizations got city inspectors to pay more visits, write more tags, and accept fewer excuses in their neighborhood.

Several organizations obtained public works improvements and better services -- curbs, sidewalks, sewers, more reliable streetcleaning and garbage pickup, demolition of abandoned buildings, maintenance on city-owned lots -- through advocacy with public officials and participation in government planning processes.

Grants in these projects paid for equipment and materials, publicity, stipends for organizers and coordinators, and sometimes wages for work crews (especially crews of neighborhood youth).

Communication and marketing

Communications projects are important because residents need to know more about each other and the issues that face them. Likewise, people and institutions outside the neighborhood need to know about the neighborhood's concerns and capacities. These projects include newsletters, block captain networks, and brochures and slide shows.

Newsletters are the most common communications strategy. A newsletter can educate residents about local issues, inform them of opportunities to respond to these issues, and inform them of the activities of the neighborhood organization.

Newsletters are also handy for showing other legitimizers of neighborhoods that there is a "there" in the neighborhood, and that things are happening there. The same is true of brochures, videos, slide shows, and other presentations about the neighborhood. These pieces themselves are tangible evidence that the neighborhood is doing something. A good goal for neighborhood groups is to increase circulation of these communications pieces: to businesses and institutions, government offices, funders, and other potential allies as well as residents.

Newsletter distribution can be the basis for forming networks of block captains. These networks can do communications and organizational work far beyond distributing newsletters. They can link block residents and the organization by relaying information about block problems, crimes, development proposals, ad hoc meetings and other items through flyers and word of mouth as well as the newsletter.

Communications projects often use donated or discounted help from photographers, cable television franchises, typesetters, etc. These expert resources may be brokered by the community foundation or located by the neighborhood group. Distribution can be done by service organizations such as Boy Scouts, as well as by volunteers to the neighborhood organization. Newsletters can often be financed by advertising sales. Asking for these sorts of help expands the neighborhood group's skills and base of support.

In one city in the Mott program, a "communications center" was created: the Neighborhood Small Grants Fund bought desktop publishing equipment (and training and supervision in its use) which all neighborhood groups could use to produce their own newsletters, flyers, brochures, and other publications.

Other communications projects included an attractive brochure about the neighborhood which was distributed through realtors, schools, parks, and other channels; and slide shows and videos which told the story of the neighborhood and the organization to be shown to current and prospective members, residents, and allies.

Grants paid start-up production and distribution costs, and sometimes stipends for editors and coordinators of distribution networks.

Crime prevention

Crime prevention and public safety efforts are good projects to follow clean-up campaigns. Many of the unsafe conditions that harbor or raise the risk of criminal activity can be removed in the clean-up: abandoned cars or buildings, weedy

hangouts, littered lots, etc. In addition, residents who have now made the commitment and expended the energy to clean-up are more likely to confront and roust out undesirable behaviors.

The volunteer network that emerged doing clean-up can be used as the nucleus for block club work. Most city police departments encourage the formation of block clubs as critical for successful crime prevention at the neighborhood level. These are useful not only for crime prevention but also as communication networks within the neighborhood, as mentioned above. The encouragement of block captains is also a leadership development activity.

Developing block clubs should lead to improved relations with police departments and increased attention from the city council to assist with removing problem situations or bringing in additional city resources.

A difficulty with block clubs is that both energy and interest decline after a while. It's important that block clubs be engaged not only in crime prevention work, but also in other business of the neighborhood -- keeping people informed, learning about other needs, recruiting folks for participation in neighborhood projects, planning social events, and working on projects.

In the Mott program, neighborhood groups organized block clubs, safe houses and surveillance patrols -- on foot or in cars, using radios or cordless phones to alert police to suspicious activities. They sponsored training in personal safety, property security, and neighbor watch practices. They distributed and installed locks and security lights. They picketed pornographic theaters, harassed prostitutes and their customers, and worked with police to close drug houses and target enforcement resources.

Grants paid for materials and equipment such as CB radios and flashlights for citizen patrols; publicity, outreach, meeting, and training costs; and stipends for organizers and coordinators. Neighborhood groups typically combined community foundation grants with aid from police and other prevention and criminal justice programs.

Neighborhood facilities

Many neighborhood organizations will work to create, retain or improve such facilities as community centers, parks, gardens, and schools. Often, awareness of certain pressing needs in these areas will arise in the course of doing some of the simpler projects mentioned earlier. As the neighborhood organization acquires strength and confidence, it takes on these projects which are more complicated and long-term.

These projects typically involve specialization of labor, which is a mixed blessing: skills development doesn't happen equally among volunteers. To guard against this, efforts should be made to extend skill-learning opportunities to everyone interested. The group's newsletter can make these opportunities widely known.

In some cases in the Mott program, organizations obtained title to a property and then rehabilitated a structure to create a community center, or developed a garden or food park on a vacant site. In other cases, neighborhood groups worked with a public facility owner (e.g. the school board, housing authority or parks department) to keep the facility open, plan improvements, build new structures, and even manage operations and upkeep.

Grants helped pay for land and buildings; rehabilitation materials; equipment and furnishings; utilities and other operating costs; and staff stipends -- especially for organizers and advocates.

Planning

Planning projects -- for neighborhood land use, zoning, transportation, commercial revitalization, human services, and/or economic development -- can result in useful products as well as help organize a neighborhood. A spectrum of people can be brought in through a planning process, forming a core that serves the organization for a long time afterward.

Plans can focus an organization's energies, providing a strategic vision for the neighborhood's future that can guide subsequent decisions and projects. They are also opportunities to build relationships with city planners, elected officials, university planning departments, and other

resources during both development and implementation. A major gain from planning efforts is to ensure that the neighborhood gets its fair share of public resources -- green space, paving, home loan money, schools, etc.

There are dangers in taking on planning projects, however. Planning is sometimes slow and tedious, and a group has to be careful not to sidetrack its momentum. It's best to have other things going on at the same time to keep pressure on and interest up -- inside and outside the neighborhood.

Once they have produced a written plan, organizations should be sure to get full mileage from it -- by holding public meetings to inform residents and others, and by holding authorities accountable to the plan.

Plans were created or updated by several groups in the Mott program. City planners and other officials were engaged to help integrate the neighborhood's plan into broader city plans. Neighborhood groups also commonly used a university design or planning class to devise and depict options, and/or a facilitator to run errands, make contacts, and otherwise support the volunteer task forces and committees that developed the plan.

Grants paid for materials (drawings, photographs, models, posters, reports); publicity and meeting costs (space, refreshments, child care, etc.); and stipends and mileage costs for staff and student support.

Environmental protection

Typically, when an environmental hazard is noted -- groundwater contamination, polluted air, high lead content in the soil, etc. -- risks are presented to all the residents. These risks present, as their one positive effect, a catalyst for mobilizing and uniting community residents.

In these projects, resident education through meetings and newsletters is very important. Demands that something be done are important. Too frequently, city governments are not used to dealing with crises of these kinds, and it is often neighborhood leadership that orients them to the necessities of taking action in this area of public health and accident prevention.

Solutions to environmental problems are often expensive, and responsibility hard to affix. Neighborhood groups taking on these issues need stamina for a long haul and ingenuity in their tactics.

In the Mott program, neighborhood environmental projects focused on clean-up and compensation for victims of groundwater pollution; modification or relocation of hazardous industries; and preservation of wetlands and other natural assets from highway development. Activities included education and public demonstrations within the neighborhood and the broader community to increase awareness and understanding of the problem; participation in public advisory committees; formation of coalitions with other impacted neighborhood and community groups; and negotiation with polluters, builders, and public officials.

Grants paid to send organization members to training; to bring in outside experts to lead workshops, give testimony, and help devise solutions; and for publicity (newsletters, flyers, posters, brochures, videos, postage, etc.).

Youth

The best youth projects have benefits on three levels: (a) they benefit the neighborhood by using youth as a resource for neighborhood improvement; (b) they engage youth constructively instead of destructively in the neighborhood; and (c) they benefit youth through increasing their skills, knowledge, and/or income.

A difficulty with youth projects is that they can demand a lot of time, money, and energy. Adult leaders can easily be sidetracked from other neighborhood issues.

In the Mott program, youth work crews were organized to clean up vacant properties, create community gardens, perform home improvements, and staff chore services. Youth were trained in minor home repair and then linked into volunteer repair networks. They also helped in crime prevention activities. Some organizations sent youth to outdoor leadership development programs as well as using them in neighborhood service projects. Others conducted youth sports and recreation programs.

One project involved youth from several neighborhoods in a "Full Court Press Against Crime." It combined a "Learning Season," featuring workshops on a variety of topics, with service projects by each participating neighborhood and a basketball program. An awards ceremony at year-end honored individuals and neighborhoods that earned the most points in the various areas.

Some neighborhood groups developed academic support programs. One association sponsored orientation and study sessions for college entrance exams. Another established study rooms, complete with computers, in a housing project. Another encouraged student academic achievement by providing mentors and access to jobs and higher education.

Youth project grants paid for equipment and materials -- balls and bats, textbooks and study guides, shovels and rakes, etc. They also helped pay for organizers, coordinators and tutors, and related costs; outing costs; and occasionally, wages for youth service workers.

Housing

Housing projects tend to fall into three categories: home maintenance and repairs; co-op development and property management; and construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing.

Housing programs can follow nicely from clean-up/fix-up campaigns, especially such projects as a tool library and home repair instruction. Needless to say, these efforts are rewarded with improved housing stock as well as increased property values. Repair-and-deduct legislation, though woefully infrequent, allows home repair programs to yield real dividends to renters. Property management is a skill from which renters and owners alike benefit.

Development of affordable housing is a complex activity, requiring advanced technical skills in resource development, financing, and construction management, as well as unusual persistence and attention to detail. Training is required; additional resources are required; and paid professional staff is almost always required. A good resident base is also necessary to give input into design decisions, marketing decisions, and property management decisions.

In the Mott program, paint-up/fix-up campaigns, tool lending libraries, and cooperation with weatherization and home improvement loan programs were common projects to maintain existing housing.

A few organizations worked to create more housing through renovation of abandoned houses or construction on vacant lots, usually in cooperation with neighborhood development corporations. Two organizations led development of elderly housing projects in their neighborhoods. A couple of projects helped renters become homeowners or form housing cooperatives.

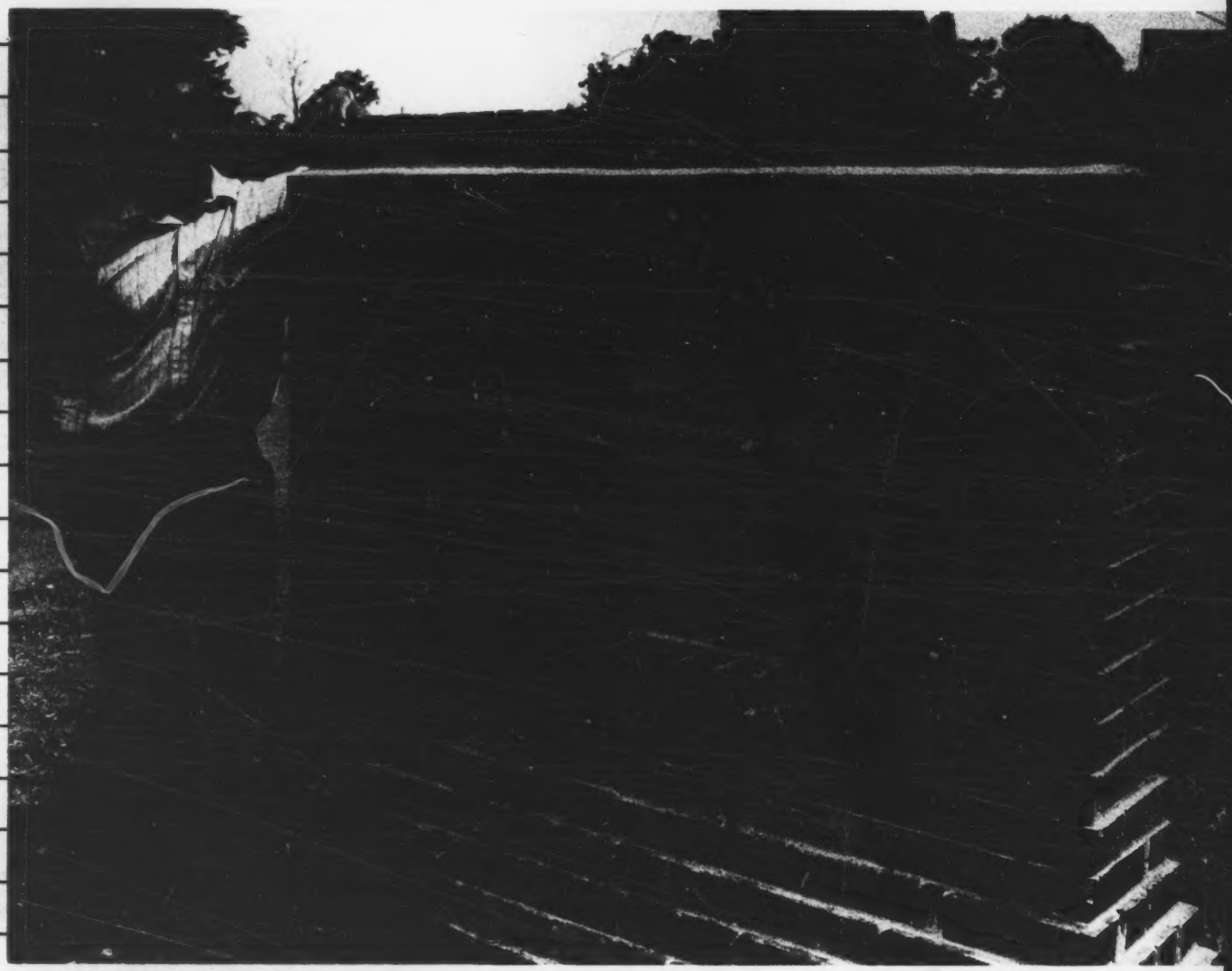
Grants helped pay for properties, materials, tools, staff stipends, and expenses for planning, organizing, and marketing.

The relation of projects to capacity growth

In many cases, a grant can catalyze activity that continues long after community foundation grant support ends.

For example, community fairs are easier once a group knows where to find donated ice cream, loudspeakers, and chairs; how to sell t-shirts and refreshments to defray other costs; and who can direct a kitchen operation to serve 300 plates of spaghetti. Clean-up and crime prevention activities can be repeated once a group has working relationships with the right city departments and knows how to promote activities within the neighborhood. Once a group starts putting out a newsletter, it finds resident volunteers to write, layout, and deliver, and it learns how to sell ads to cover costs.

But grantmakers should remember that there is more to neighborhood-building than the ability to do one type of activity on a continuing basis. As discussed in Chapter Three, community foundations will want to help neighborhood groups develop a range of capacities, if the goal is to help groups bring major change to their neighborhoods. This means supporting a range of projects, possibly over several years, encouraging neighborhood grantees to undertake projects with a developmental sequence in mind, and supplementing project grants with technical assistance and other growth opportunities.



CHAPTER ♦ SIX

Assessing the Effectiveness of a Neighborhoods Program

This chapter presents a checklist that can be used to assess the effectiveness of a neighborhoods grants program, or of specific neighborhood organizations or projects. It is organized into three sections, corresponding to the areas where an effective neighborhoods grants program can be expected to produce benefits: funded organizations, neighborhoods where funded organizations are active, and the community foundation itself.

Each section lists "accomplishments" or "results" one could expect from successful neighborhood projects and programs.

The checklist can be used in many ways for planning, evaluation, and education. It can be used at the neighborhood level by individual organizations, and at the community foundation level by staff and advisory committees.

Possible uses include:

- **Self-assessment by organizations of their capacity and the benefits they are bringing to their neighborhood.** This can be done annually, or at the beginning and end of projects.
- **Orientation and ongoing education of new board members of organizations, and community foundation neighborhood advisory committee members, to the roles and goals of neighborhood organizations and programs.** The checklist can be used to guide discussions in orientation meetings and retreats, and as a compact reference.
- **Determination of consensus/disagreement on needed directions.** Different board, staff and committee members can compare assessments to see where they agree and disagree on what needs to be done.
- **Proposal review and pre-grant organizational assessment.** How capable is an organization currently? To what extent does a proposal plan for growth in capacity and neighborhood benefit?
- **Grant, project and program outcome evaluation.** To what extent are grants, projects, and the neighborhood program as a whole achieving these growths and benefits?
- **Program and project design.** Goals and priorities of a neighborhoods grant program can be tailored to encourage the outcomes listed here. Neighborhood organizations likewise can craft their projects and set organizational goals.
- **Cues for technical assistance.** Program or organizational areas identified to be weak can be targeted for technical assistance.

There are at least two ways to use the checklist to assess a project, organization or program: (1) check items where performance is high (or needs improvement), or (2) devise 3- or 5-point scales to rate different degrees of accomplishment or competence.

Impact on funded neighborhood organizations

Look for growth in the following areas of organizational capacity within a funded organization:

Community Organizing/Advocacy

- Makes itself visible to neighborhood residents
- Invites people to participate in the organization's affairs and activities
- Provides a variety of opportunities for meaningful participation and leadership
- Uses effective methods of ascertaining neighborhood concerns, e.g. well-publicized

and well-run public forums and meetings, or door-to-door or telephone canvass

___Uses democratic, participatory methods to make decisions about its agenda, goals, and tactics

___Articulates issues in ways that invite action and participation

___Advocates effectively, i.e. makes its concerns visible to people and institutions able to act in response to those concerns, in ways that move them to act

___New people continually join in organization's activities and leadership positions

___Large numbers of people participate and wield leadership in organization's activities

___People are supportive of organization and its agenda, even if they are not personally active in their support

___Membership and leadership are representative of the neighborhood's population as a whole

Advocacy skills include:

___Individual testimony in public hearings and before official bodies

___Group presence in public hearings and before official bodies

___Theatrical and oratorical demonstrations on occasions of its own devising

Organizational Development

___Mission is clear and widely understood

___Internal roles (e.g. officers, members, committees, ad hoc project volunteers, staff) are clear and widely understood

___Procedures for making plans and decisions, selecting and replacing leaders, etc. are clear, fair, and widely understood

___Decisions are made in ways that don't exhaust people but invite continued participation -- balancing efficiency and participation; consensus-building and voting; majority rule and respect for minority views

___Governance meetings occur regularly, are open to public, and are run fairly

___Plans for organizational achievement, with specific long- and short-term goals and strategies, exist, are used to guide activity, and are updated with broad input regularly

___Knowledge and responsibility are shared so that dependence on one or a few people is minimized

___Workloads are shared so that exhaustion is minimized and skill transference is maximized

___Recordkeeping (e.g. minutes) is accurate and sufficient, and records are open and accessible

___Activities, goals, concerns, and accomplishments are communicated regularly to members, neighborhood, supporters, and other interested audiences

___Finances are managed adequately -- e.g. budgets are set and followed, bank accounts balanced, expenditures documented

___A range of fundraising skills are widely held -- e.g. campaigns, events, product sales, grantseeking, dues

___Fundraising activity is in scale with organization's objectives and project activities

___Funds come from multiple sources

___Participant turnover is moderate

___Leadership transitions are orderly

___Organization has written mission statement, by-laws, articles of incorporation, minutes, financial records, etc.

___Finances are in the black, finance charges are minimized, bills are paid, bad checks are not written, etc.

___Communications vehicles -- e.g. newsletters, videos, slideshows, brochures -- are distributed regularly and widely

Project Skills

___Crime prevention principles and techniques

___Garden creation and operation

___Event staging

___Property (real estate and buildings) maintenance and/or construction

___Property development skills, e.g. financial analysis and packaging, property title searches, contract negotiation and management, marketing

___Volunteer recruitment and utilization

___Policy, ordinance, and regulation research and advocacy

___Planning

Linkages

Formal and informal relationships with, and support (money, services, facilities, expertise, advocacy, etc.) from:

___Churches (e.g. congregations, denominations, ecumenical bodies)

___Service organizations and agencies (e.g. Lions, Rotary, Scouts, YMCA)

___Hospitals, universities and other institutions

___Businesses -- large and small, individual and associations

___Professionals -- individuals and associations

___Government -- elected officials, agency and department staff, advisory committees, etc. from all levels

___Foundations

___Unions

___Other neighborhood organizations and multi-neighborhood coalitions

___Sources of issue education and advocacy assistance

___Sources of organizational development assistance

Benefits to neighborhoods

Look for the following sorts of benefits to neighborhoods from funded organizations -- as direct accomplishments of small grants projects, or as spinoffs triggered by the organization's efforts:

Community Cohesion

__ Increased neighborhood identity and pride

__ Increased familiarity, reduced isolation among neighbors

__ Increased knowledge about and ongoing communication on neighborhood issues, people, events, and institutions

Physical Improvements

__ Trash, weedy overgrowth and bulky items (e.g. junked appliances and cars) cleaned up and hauled away (can be measured by the ton, dumpster, truckload or bag)

__ Abandoned structures demolished

__ Buildings and fences painted and repaired

__ Buildings weatherized

__ Public works (e.g. streets, curbs, sidewalks, sewers, streetlights, traffic signs and signals) installed, upgraded, and/or maintained

__ Gardens, parks, and playgrounds created and maintained

__ Trees planted

__ Murals painted

__ Environmental hazards removed

__ Graffiti and vandalism reduced or repaired

Crime Prevention

Opportunity for crime, and fear of crime, reduced as results of:

__ Neighborhood watchfulness increased

__ Personal safety behavior more widely used

__ Property security practices more widely observed

___Property security hardware more widely installed

Police-resident cooperation improved as evidenced by:

___Increased quality and quantity of information flow in both directions

___Decreased hostility, brutality between residents and police

___Police service better targeted on problem locations

Neighborhood Development and Services

___Neighborhood displacement and degradation (e.g. project redesign, and noise, pollution, traffic, and parking controls) decreased

___Neighborhood gets a fair share of development benefits (e.g. replacement housing, construction and permanent jobs)

___Plans to guide development (e.g. land use and zoning, housing and economic revitalization, transportation, and other services) created or revised with residents' input

___Housing affordable to residents created, preserved, and/or improved

___Neighborhood services and facilities improved (e.g. bus service, recreational programs, libraries, schools, job training, job placement, health clinics, child care, retail shops, banks, homeless shelters, food banks)

___Job opportunities for neighborhood residents increased

___Development plans for non-neighborhood-oriented land uses (e.g. to build or expand highways, airports, and stadiums) dropped or changed

Impact on the community foundation

Look for the following sorts of changes in the community foundation, as a result of operating a program of support for low income neighborhood organizations:

Skills

Look for growing competence in the following areas:

__ Designing a proactive grants program

__ Tailoring grant application, review, and evaluation procedures to be appropriate for selected grantee populations

__ Forming and nurturing advisory mechanisms

__ Discovering issues of concern in the community

__ Finding fledgling organizations

__ Recognizing authentic self-governed community organizations

__ Recognizing authentic neighborhood-building projects

__ Helping organizations craft small grants projects that contribute to larger organizational and community goals

__ Helping organizations assess their needs for project and developmental assistance

__ Providing project and developmental assistance directly to emerging and community-based organizations

__ Brokering project and developmental assistance: matching sources to organizations

__ Building relationships of trust with neighborhood organizations

__ Assessing grant outcomes

__ Assessing growth in organizational capacity

__ Assessing project results

___Boosting the visibility of issues, programs and constituencies

___Attracting financial support for a grantmaking program

___Communicating with people of diverse cultures and socioeconomic status

___Incorporating citizen participation and advisory features into grantmaking programs

Knowledge

Look for increases in:

___Sources of information about community concerns, issues, resources, and action strategies

___Flow of information about community concerns, issues, resources, and action strategies

Stature

Look for increased positive standing for the community foundation among:

___Citizens and neighborhoods -- especially low income and minority

___Public officials -- especially in City Hall

___ People and institutions with linkages to neighborhoods -- in corporate, civic, religious, educational, cultural, environmental, media, and funding circles

Look for signs that the community foundation is acquiring a reputation as committed to:

___ Citizen participation in public affairs

___ Increased community cohesion

___ Self-help and local problem-solving

___ Improving living conditions in distressed parts of the community

Look for signs that the community foundation is acquiring a reputation as skilled in:

___ Issues of concern to low income, inner city and minority constituencies

___ Working with local government

___ Working with small, emerging organizations

___ Working with resident-controlled organizations

___ Small grants

___ Working with non-monetary assistance to grantees

APPENDIX ◆ A

Neighborhoods Grants Programs in Eight Community Foundations

This book is based on the experience of the eight community foundations that participated in the Community Foundations and Neighborhoods Small Grants Program of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation from 1984 to 1989.

That program had three goals:

- To support neighborhood-based groups in low income areas that are working to solve significant local problems, but traditionally lack access to financial resources.
- To help community foundations explore ways in which they could lend support to such low income neighborhood organizations.
- To link community foundations together in a common effort through a common evaluation, technical assistance, and networking activities.

The Mott Foundation provided grants, administrative and technical support, and a common evaluation plan to the eight community foundations, who in turn raised a required match amount and implemented a program of minigrants and other support to local low income neighborhood groups.

Grants to community foundations were of three levels, depending on whether the community foundation assets at program onset were less than $3 million, between $3 million and $10 million, or between $10 million and $22 million. Match requirements varied proportionately, as did a supplemental Mott grant to support community foundation administrative costs. The following table shows the dollar amounts involved. Figures shown are for Year 5 of the program; match and administrative grants were somewhat smaller in earlier years.

C. S. Mott Foundation's Community Foundations and Neighborhoods Small Grants Program, Year 5 (1988-89)

Community Foundation	Mott Minigrant/ TA support	Mini-mum Local Match	Minimum Total for Nbd Mini-grants/TA	Admin. Support
Arizona Community Foundation	$15,000	6,000	21,000	3,100
Community Foundation of New Jersey	$15,000	6,000	21,000	3,100
Greater Worcester Community Foundation	$15,000	6,000	21,000	3,100
Dayton Foundation	$25,000	13,000	38,000	4,200
San Diego Community Foundation	$25,000	13,000	38,000	4,200
Greater Kansas City Community Foundation and Affiliated Trusts	$25,000	13,000	38,000	4,200
Foundation for the Carolinas	$35,000	21,000	56,000	5,000
Oregon Community Foundation	$35,000	21,000	56,000	5,000

Mott technical and evaluation support included annual visits to each community by an independent evaluator; an annual Sharing Meeting where all eight community foundations could share information, questions, and strategies, and learn from outside resource persons; and a newsletter, PARTNER, addressing relevant aspects

of community foundations' neighborhoods programs. Rainbow Research, Inc., a nonprofit evaluation and effectiveness firm based in Minneapolis, provided this technical and evaluation support.

Each community foundation made small grants to eligible low income neighborhood groups in their communities. Grants could be up to $7500 (later raised to $10,000), but most were smaller: average grant size was about $3800.

Several community foundations raised more than the required match amount, so the size of their neighborhood grants portfolios ranged to over $100,000 per year.

In addition to direct grants, community foundations assisted neighborhood groups with training, consultation, networking, and a variety of other aid. This aid was provided by the community foundation directly, or by other resources often brokered by the community foundation.

Community foundations were encouraged to be creative in tailoring their programs to local conditions. Accordingly, programs differed from place to place. Each community foundation's program is described briefly below.

Arizona Community Foundation

Key contextual factors: Although some Mexican barrios are long-established, for the most part Phoenix and Tucson are new cities where people live in developments and subdivisions and are as apt to identify with where they came from as where they live now. City government had no program of support for neighborhoods when this program began. This limited interest in the Community Foundation's program and contributed to the absence of prospective institutional partners. It also made for a relatively small number of active neighborhood organizations eligible for support.

Arizona Community Foundation is statewide in scope but it chose to concentrate its neighborhoods grants in the Phoenix area (with the exception of one Tucson grant) -- primarily to make program logistics more manageable.

Program partners: With little "old wealth," few foundations other than the Community Foundation, few corporate headquarters, and even relatively weak support for the United Way, there were few prospective funding partners for the Community Foundation.

Matching funds came from the City of Phoenix and Maricopa County in the first two years of the program, and two corporations contributed funds in Year 2. Raising those funds was difficult, and as its own assets grew (from $2.7 million in 1983 to $21 million in 1989) the Community Foundation found it easier to provide the match with its own discretionary funds.

The Community Foundation's executive director staffed the program personally, with help in Years 2 - 5 from a local consultant.

Grantmaking procedures: Arizona took a quiet approach to finding prospective grantees. Before the first year, the Community Foundation executive director consulted with representatives of the city, county, United Way, Urban League, Junior League, a bank, an established community development corporation and a community center to identify prospective neighborhood groups to support. From that research, three groups were selected. The Community Foundation executive director worked with each group to design a proposal that was then funded.

In subsequent years, additional groups identified in equally quiet ways were considered for support. As long as groups continued to make progress toward their project and organizational goals, renewal funding was given priority. Midyear and year-end progress reports were required from all grantees, and Community Foundation staff helped each organization set goals and prepare proposals annually. In most years, one or two grantees were added. Two organizations received funding for all five years, another was funded for four years, another for three.

Technical assistance to neighborhood groups: Organizations were assisted mainly on an ad hoc, one-to-one basis. The Community Foundation executive director was a primary provider of project and developmental assistance, available on-call. A Foundation consultant worked closely with two groups in their initial years. Additional help came from several sources: the Community

Foundation director arranged pro bono legal help for several groups; the Institute for Cultural Affairs worked extensively with one organization (especially after ICA transferred its office from Los Angeles to Phoenix); Citizens' Clearinghouse on Hazardous Waste worked with another group; Center for Community Change met with one group; another group tapped into state training and action networks for chemical abuse prevention. University and community college staff helped two groups with specific projects.

This multifaceted approach partly was necessitated by the absence of any single strong source of training and assistance. In hopes of strengthening mutual assistance networks, the Community Foundation sponsored a statewide, daylong conference for neighborhood activists in Year 2. And in Year 5 a grant went to the Community Foundation's neighborhoods consultant to research the feasibility of an ongoing "neighborhoods alliance" or other technical assistance vehicle.

Future of the program: As Mott support drew to a close, the Community Foundation was considering continued support to one or a few organizations from its own funds. It also planned to continue researching and possibly organizing a neighborhood resource center or alliance in the Phoenix area. Discussions on that topic were underway with the United Way, Community Council, selected city officials, religious leaders and neighborhood representatives. Participation in this program also directly contributed to Community Foundation involvement in collaborative community-based development projects and grants to incipient community development corporations.

Foundation For The Carolinas

Key contextual factors: The neighborhoods program in Charlotte was born at a time of growing neighborhoods influence, evidenced most dramatically by a city charter change in 1983 from at-large to district City Council elections, forced by a strong alliance of essentially middle-class neighborhood organizations which were interested in staving off development pressures in this high growth city. The community foundation's program focused on strengthening the low income part of the neighborhoods spectrum. While the City had no program of support for neighborhoods, it recognized over 200 neighborhood organizations, many of them low income.

Program partners: Also helping shape the community foundation's program was the presence of a willing and able resource, the Urban Institute of the University of North Carolina-Charlotte. Already active in city-county government affairs and in operating Leadership Charlotte, the Urban Institute saw this program as an opportunity to serve the low income segment of the community. The Urban Institute acted as adjunct staff to the program and was the primary technical assistance provider to neighborhood groups.

Community roots for the program grew through the Community Foundation's Neighborhood Grants Committee which was responsible for program design, planning, evaluation and grant decisions. Its approximately 10 members included people associated with the two local colleges, United Way, city and county government (including housing, employment and recreation programs), businesspeople, neighborhood leaders (in later years), low income advocates, and two members of the community foundation's Board and distributions committee.

To raise visibility further, the Neighborhood Grants Program published its own newsletter three times a year. The Urban Institute also created a slide show about the program which was shown around town.

Match funding came from a variety of sources including the community foundation, a bank, a private foundation and the city.

Grantmaking procedures: Foundation For The Carolinas used a competitive Request for Proposals process, with a simplified application form. Program announcements were mailed annually to previous applicants, grantees and other neighborhood groups that had contacted the program during the past year. Public service announcements were made on radio, and the newspaper also carried information about the program. Announcements were followed by a public meeting held in the Afro-American Cultural Center to announce the program, recognize current participants, and answer questions about grant applications.

Community foundation and Urban Institute staff divided the work of reviewing proposals and visiting applicants before sitting down with the Neighborhood Grants Committee to make grants recommendations. Those recommendations were forwarded to the community foundation's distributions committee for final funding decisions.

The following criteria, developed by the Neighborhood Grants Committee, were used to guide funding decisions and program administration by the Foundation and the Urban Institute:

1) The emphasis will be on low income neighborhoods.

2) The emphasis will be on serving neighborhood organizations which have potential for continuity although they may be in the early stage of formation.

3) A neighborhood could potentially be a very small geographical area -- as small as several streets. However, a neighborhood identity and some concept of geographical boundaries must be demonstrated.

4) Neighborhood organizations should have a base of support within their own neighborhood, or a "cause" which the majority of residents recognize as an important issue.

5) Neighborhood organizations should give evidence of internal consensus and accountability to their membership on decisionmaking.

6) A plan for actual management of grant funds needs to be developed. The neighborhood organization needs to show that it could manage the funds responsibly.

7) As evidence of neighborhood-wide support, the neighborhood is required to provide a match for the Foundation grant, with money or in-kind services. No specific amount is suggested; however, each proposal must indicate an amount of money or in-kind services that will be raised or offered by the neighborhood writing this proposal.

8) Because lack of coordinated or co-operative effort between agencies and neighborhoods is often a root problem, neighborhood groups which demonstrate efforts to work in cooperation with other organizations, churches and businesses will be given priority.

9) It is the desire of the Neighborhood Grants Committee to serve not only inner city neighborhoods but to have a geographical spread including neighborhoods in the county or surrounding counties.

10) Neighborhoods are encouraged to develop a plan to carry out the project. Priority will be given to neighborhoods developing a plan with time schedules.

11) Each proposal will include an amount of money that will be used to develop leadership skills. These funds will be administered by the Urban Institute and will be used for a retreatand workshops on the development of a range of leadership skills.

Twenty-five to 30 proposals typically were submitted each year, and the Foundation funded 10 to 15 of them. The time from program announcement to grant announcements was about four months. Virtually all grantees were very informal; only one had 501(c)(3) status (interestingly, it proved to be the least successful).

Technical assistance to neighborhood groups: The Foundation contracted with the Urban Institute to provide technical assistance to neighborhood groups (for $7,500 per year, plus $5,000 for a leadership retreat). Formats that brought all neighborhoods together were favored for the networking and mutual assistance that were fostered. Community foundation staff and the Neighborhood Grants Committee set goals, helped plan and attended many assistance opportunities. Events included an orientation session in October, shortly after grants were announced; a weekend leadership retreat for leaders of all grantees; and workshops on organizational issues such as financial management, leadership development, and on topical issues such as drug abuse.

The Urban Institute also provided fiscal agent services to most neighborhood grantees, which included individual instruction in checkbook management and budgeting.

Future of the program: Continuation of this program was the top priority of the Foundation's distribution committee, as Mott support drew to a close. Prospects for financial support were being explored with the city, county and United Way.

The Neighborhoods Grants Committee was also exploring where to locate the program; options included affiliating it more closely with the Urban Institute, with the community foundation, establishing it as an independent entity, or continuing the current collaboration between community foundation and Urban Institute.

The Dayton Foundation

Key contextual factors: Three contextual factors helped shape the Dayton Foundation's neighborhoods program, called Neighbor to Neighbor. First, the community foundation stepped into a program which actually had begun a year earlier as a joint program of the Junior League and a local bank. This set the precedent of community support for, and institutional cooperation on behalf of, neighborhood activity which the Dayton Foundation expanded but did not have to create from scratch.

Second, the City already supported neighborhood activism -- of a certain kind. Since the early 1970s Dayton has had a citywide system of district Priority Boards, whose members are elected by district residents, that are mandated to provide citizen participation into city decisionmaking. Each Priority Board has a small staff, paid by the city, whose job is to support the Board and any neighborhood initiatives within the district. The community foundation and the city had to work through several turf and philosophical issues to figure out how the Priority Board system and Neighbor to Neighbor could work together. The city provided both advice and funds to Neighbor to Neighbor; it contributed to a program emphasis on self-help projects and not advocacy or organizing, and promoted the concept of all-volunteer organizations (since staffing was available from Priority Boards).

Third, during Years 4 and 5 of the program, the likelihood emerged of multi-million dollar support becoming available for neighborhood housing and economic development -- mostly from banks wanting to strengthen their community reinvestment records. Shaping that emerging prospect to be most favorable to independent neighborhood organizations, and working with neighborhood organizations to get ready to make the most of that emerging opportunity, were key program concerns in those years.

Program partners: Matching funds came from a bank, and in latter years from the city as well. To set program guidelines, make grants decisions, evaluate program progress and plan for program continuation the Dayton Foundation organized a Neighbor to Neighbor Advisory Committee. Committee members varied from year to year but included representatives of a range of institutions interested in healthy neighborhoods -- the city, the funding bank, a major corporation, the two local universities, the religious community, a Dayton Foundation trustee, and in latter years former neighborhood grantees.

Grantmaking procedures: Grants were awarded twice yearly, with application deadlines of October 1 and February 1, through a competitive Request for Proposals process. The Foundation invited applicants for each round with a mailing to all known qualifying organizations, individual neighborhood leaders, Priority Boards, etc. Application assistance was provided by community foundation staff on request, and also by Priority Board staff. Applications were reviewed first by staff, who made telephone visits and sometimes site visits to applicants, and then by the advisory committee which made awards decisions according to these criteria:

1) Does the project respond to an important need or opportunity?

2) Are the resources and time-frame adequate to achieve the specific project purpose?

3) Will the project serve low income residents?

4) Can the project be used as a model in other neighborhoods?

5) Is the neighborhood association representative of the area it serves?

6) Will this project strengthen the neighborhood association?

Starting in Year 3, the Foundation divided its neighborhoods grants funds into two pools. About $10,000 each year was provided for grants of up to $2,000 each to smaller, fledgling organizations for specific projects such as clean-up or communications efforts. A pool of about $30,000 was allocated for larger grants (in the $5,000 to $10,000 range) to more experienced organizations engaged in housing development and more

ambitious capacity-building projects.

Technical assistance to neighborhood groups: Assistance came from several sources, including community foundation staff. In Years 4 and 5 the community foundation also retained a half-time consultant to work more intensively in the neighborhoods program -- to staff the advisory committee, advocate for neighborhoods, and work with neighborhood organizations individually and jointly on project and organizational development. Both universities in town also were granted support to assist neighborhood groups individually and through citywide conferences and leadership training programs. Out-of-town consultants were brought in as keynote speakers at conferences and to conduct occasional training programs. Specialized assistance also came from several other sources -- for example, a community garden assistance organization called Grow With Your Neighbor; Legal Aid; and the Priority Boards.

Future of the program: In the last year of Mott support, the community foundation trustees affirmed strong neighborhoods as a continuing program priority. The community foundation moved its staff from the frontlines to a role more in the background by helping to organize an independent nonprofit center with a neighborhoods-controlled board, Neighbor to Neighbor, Inc. This new organization is expected to take on advocacy, assistance and possibly grantmaking.

Greater Kansas City Community Foundation and Affiliated Trusts

Key contextual factors: Kansas City Community Foundation had two advantages when it started its neighborhoods grants program: several local funders were already committed to supporting neighborhood self-help, and a proficient local assistance center for neighborhoods already existed, the Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance (KCNA). The City also had some small programs of support to neighborhood groups.

Program partners: The Community Foundation operated its Neighborhood Small Grants Fund in partnership with the Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance: KCNA was responsible for relations with neighborhood groups, including outreach, proposal preparation and technical assistance provision, and the Community Foundation was responsible for relations with funding partners, including recruitment and information.

Several local private and corporate foundations, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, and the city were recruited as funding partners. Each funder was given a seat on the Small Grants Advisory Committee. Combined with Mott and Community Foundation discretionary funds, the Fund totaled about $100,000 per year. Approximately 60 percent of that was awarded to low income neighborhood organizations, and 40 percent to moderate income groups and community development corporations.

Grantmaking procedures: KCNA sent a Request for Proposals annually to over 150 eligible neighborhood groups. KCNA staff then held a workshop (two, in some years) for those interested in applying for grants, and provided individual assistance on request.

About 50 to 70 proposals were submitted each year. Proposals were reviewed first by KCNA staff. They forwarded their funding recommendations along with the applications to the Small Grants Advisory Committee who made final awards decisions. About 30 grants were awarded each year. Proposals were evaluated according to these criteria:

1) The neighborhood organization can demonstrate its ability to work creatively on significant local issues.

2) The organization has broadbased neighborhood support for and participation in its activities.

3) The organization has active, identifiable leadership that is recognized by the neighborhood and demonstrates internal consensus and accountability to the membership in decisionmaking.

4) The organization demonstrates fiscal accountability.

5) Community resources are invested as a match to implement the activity.

6) The project is feasible, the budget is realistic, the objectives can be met with available resources within a reasonable time frame.

Groups were encouraged to apply for funds year

after year, so long as they made progress toward their project and organizational goals.

Awards were formally presented by the Community Foundation's distributions committee chairperson in a ceremony to which grantees, funders, media and other interested audiences were invited.

The time from issuance of RFP to grant awards was about three months, April to July. The Community Foundation planned to advance that calendar to make awards in June or May, to support those neighborhood groups conducting summer-intensive projects.

Technical assistance to neighborhood groups: TA was provided by KCNA. It included fiscal accountability workshops at the beginning of the grants period for groups new to the program, and a November citywide conference attended by 200 to 400 people which neighborhood leaders helped plan. Some years included multi-session training programs for multiple groups as well, on various organizing, organizational development and project design and management topics. KCNA staff also kept in touch with grantees by phone and through visits, and provided individual assistance.

In the third year of the program, the city funded establishment of a newsletter center at the KCNA office, with desktop publishing facilities and a volunteer staff to help neighborhood groups put out their own newsletters, flyers and other publications.

Future of the program: The Community Foundation was committed to continuing the program at the same level ($90,000 -- $100,000 per year) with local funds after Mott support ended, with the only change being in the grantmaking calendar as noted above.

The experience of this program helped lead the Community Foundation and KCNA to undertake a campaign to create several hundred units of housing affordable to low income families in neighborhoods throughout the city. It also contributed to increased cooperation on homelessness issues between the Community Foundation and the United Way.

Community Foundation of New Jersey

Key contextual factors: The Community Foundation of New Jersey began life as the Greater Essex Community Foundation but expanded its scope in 1983 to the entire state. To underscore this expanded scope the Community Foundation operated its Neighborhood Grants Program as a statewide program, making grants in five cities (Trenton, Camden, Atlantic City, Passaic, and Newark) plus one year in Morristown. Three of these cities are among the nation's most blighted. While it was advantageous to the Community Foundation to distribute grants statewide, the logistics of providing support over such a large territory were always difficult.

Program partners: The Community Foundation had no operating or funding partners for the program as a whole. Rather, each neighborhood program had funding partners.

Match funds came primarily from local civic, service and corporate sources in the various grantees' own communities. Initially that support was solicited by Community Foundation staff on behalf of local projects. The Community Foundation then worked to transfer fundraising skills and contacts to the neighborhood groups so that by the fourth and fifth years they were raising match funds successfully on their own. Some neighborhood projects attracted significant funding from other sources with multiyear, six-figure Gannett Foundation support to a Passaic group being the most dramatic case.

Community Foundation staff did consult regularly, however, with local and state government officials, corporate and civic leaders, and other funders in regard to specific neighborhoods' projects.

Grantmaking procedures: The Community Foundation conducted its own research to identify suitable neighborhood grantees at the beginning of the program, with an eye to geographical balance statewide. This research included asking trustees to suggest possible grantees. The Community Foundation program officer then worked with chosen neighborhood groups to prepare proposals. The Community Foundation did not invite proposals from more organizations than it could fund. Proposals and staff recommendations were forwarded to the distribution committee who in

turn made funding recommendations to the Board of Trustees. Most organizations received support for several years.

Technical assistance to neighborhood groups: The Community Foundation program officer provided intensive coaching, hands-on assistance and workshops directly in all areas of organizational, project and financial development and management. She also made referrals to many other local and national assistance providers.

Because of the dispersed locations of grantees, most assistance was individualized.

Future of the program: Strategies for developing a permanent neighborhoods fund within the Community Foundation were being researched as Mott support ended. Corporate and foundation funders were identified as likely contributors to such a fund.

Oregon Community Foundation

Key contextual factors: Oregon Community Foundation chose to make all its neighborhoods grants in Portland, even though it is a statewide community foundation. This simplified program logistics, and allowed the Community Foundation to take full advantage of the City of Portland's considerable support for neighborhood-based citizen participation activities.

The city's Office of Neighborhood Associations (ONA) was a key influence on the Community Foundation's program. Its central staff identified low income neighborhoods and their organizations, and helped Community Foundation staff review applications; its district offices helped neighborhood organizations design projects and prepare grant applications, served as fiscal agents to organizations without 501(c)(3) status, and in some cases sponsored or provided extensive assistance to projects. The city and the Community Foundation shared information about organizations and issues frequently, and more reciprocally over the years as the Community Foundation acquired its own neighborhoods expertise.

The city's receptivity to neighborhood activity shaped the projects supported by the Community Foundation. Three types of projects were more common in Portland than in other cities: (1) projects to form organizations in unorganized neighborhoods; (2) projects to develop neighborhood land-use or economic development plans; and (3) collaborative projects involving several neighborhoods. These all reflected city priorities, and were activities that ONA district offices were skilled at supporting.

Program partners: While the city was a de facto partner especially in the program's early years, the Community Foundation had no formal partners in its neighborhoods program. The program advisory committee consisted of three foundation board members. Mott monies were matched with Community Foundation discretionary funds.

Grantmaking procedures: Grantees were recruited with a Request for Proposals circulated annually among eligible neighborhood groups, city channels and the media. Project design and application assistance was provided by the Community Foundation program officer, who presented application workshops in ONA district offices and gave individual assistance on request. ONA district staff also helped groups prepare applications. Applications were reviewed by the program officer in consultation with ONA top staff. The program officer forwarded grant recommendations to the advisory committee; that committee in turn submitted its recommendations to the Community Foundation board for final grants decisions.

Grants were made to:

1) Increase citizen involvement in circumstances which affect their lives.

2) Support the development of neighborhood-based leadership and to strengthen neighborhood organization.

3) Promote communication and cooperation among citizens' groups and other neighborhood institutions such as businesses, schools, service agencies and churches.

From about 45 income-eligible neighborhoods, 20 to 30 applications were submitted each year, and 10 to 15 grants were awarded. Grantmaking activity was concentrated in July and August; in some years, some funds were allocated in a winter round of grantmaking.

In the first four years of the program, only ONA-certified official neighborhood associations that met low income guidelines were eligible to apply. One resulting limitation was that organizations tended to focus on narrow city service and planning issues. In an effort to move its program out of the city's shadow, in Year 5 the Community Foundation invited groups independent of ONA to apply.

Technical assistance to neighborhood groups: Technical assistance to grantees on specific project or organizational issues was provided primarily by ONA district offices and Community Foundation staff. Portland State University students and faculty helped on several neighborhood planning projects.

Finding a stable source of training workshops on basic organizational topics proved to be an elusive task. Over five years, the Community Foundation supported three different trainers as one and then another elected to discontinue its training service, for various individual reasons: first one of the ONA district offices, then an independent urban resource center, then a small nonprofit consulting firm.

Citywide neighborhoods conferences were put on by ONA district offices with Community Foundation support.

The Community Foundation staff made site visits to most grantees at least annually, and the foundation also convened grantee sharing meetings about once a year. Two written progress reports yearly were required from grantees. On two or three occasions during the five years, advisory committee members met with grantees in neighborhood locations.

Future of the program: At the end of the Mott program, the Community Foundation was exploring ways to enlist financial support from the city and other sources to continue the program. It was also seeking ways to open the program to low income community groups elsewhere in the state.

San Diego Community Foundation

Key contextual factors: San Diego's neighborhoods program faced similar "new town" contextual challenges as in Arizona: weak philanthropic traditions and neighborhood awareness. Building support -- financial and in other forms -- for a neighborhoods program was a big challenge for the Community Foundation.

To the extent that the City paid attention to neighborhoods (primarily in the Planning Department), it drew neighborhood boundaries so widely as to present difficulties to citizen organizers: official "neighborhoods" often had 20,000 residents.

Program partners: Two Southern California private foundations -- the Irvine and Parker Foundations -- supported program staffing and planning with grants in the first year. Funds from the Burlington Northern Foundation supported a planning process for program continuation in the third year.

The Community Foundation organized a special distributions committee, composed of 4 - 5 trustees and 4 - 5 informed individuals from the community, to make awards decisions. In Year 3 it also formed a Neighborhood Advisory Committee, charged with securing the future of the program, whose members included representatives of the banking, real estate and property development industries.

Match funding was raised, with difficulty in most years, from outside the Community Foundation: primarily in donations of less than $1,000 from businesses in the property development field (banks, builders, architects, realtors, etc.). In Year 5, a Community Foundation donor contributed a substantial matching amount.

Grantmaking procedures: The Community Foundation laid groundwork for its grantmaking by hiring a consultant (with funding from the two local private foundations) in the first year to research the variety of neighborhood organizations active in San Diego and educate Community Foundation board and staff to neighborhood issues and grantmaking possibilities. His research was the basis for a mailing list of people active in neighborhood affairs that was used to publicize the

Community Foundation's program and solicit applications. In subsequent years the Community Foundation relied primarily on informal outreach to identify prospective grantees.

Community Foundation staff helped neighborhood groups prepare applications. Applications were then evaluated by staff and forwarded to the distributions committee to make awards decisions.

Awards varied from year to year, as the Community Foundation experimented with the program: in the first year, eight grants averaging $4,375 were made. In the second and third years, smaller grants were made to more organizations (12 in Year 3). In the fourth and fifth years, the program focused on maximizing gains by the five to seven most capable grantee organizations. They each received larger grants (average $5,000) for developing capacity, increasing membership and strengthening existing programs, with two or three smaller project grants awarded annually to less sophisticated organizations.

First-time grantees were required to raise a 10 percent match of their grant, and renewal grantees 25 percent, in cash or expert in-kind services.

Technical assistance to neighborhood groups: San Diego experimented with different technical assistance models. The Community Foundation program officer was a primary resource. In addition, the Community Foundation contracted with a consultant one year, and with the San Diego Management Center another year, to design and deliver programs of responsive assistance to neighborhood groups. In Year 4, grantees received supplemental $500 grants for technical assistance from a provider of their own choosing; and the Community Foundation funded a joint training program on organizing and membership involvement by the church-based San Diego Organizing Project. Members of the neighborhood advisory committee also volunteered assistance -- especially on technical details and in-kind services for development projects -- to specific organizations in latter years of the program.

Future of the program: As Mott support ended, San Diego Community Foundation primarily was planning ways to support physical development projects by neighborhood organizations and community development corporations -- as the only kind of neighborhood-based activity that could attract local funding support. The Community Foundation organized and staffed a steering committee of city, neighborhood, and private development representatives which decided to organize a nonprofit center to conduct joint development ventures, and provide training in physical development skills, with neighborhood groups. The Community Foundation also planned to continue cultivating individual donor support for neighborhood programs, and neighborhood projects were eligible for discretionary funding.

Greater Worcester Community Foundation

Key contextual factors: Worcester has a strong tradition of neighborhoods but not of neighborhood activism or officially recognized citizen participation processes. Instead, the heavy ethnic and church influences in the city have long supported settlement houses and service centers. This made identification of resident-controlled advocacy and empowerment organizations more difficult than in most other cities in the Mott program.

Program partners: A local private foundation, the Stoddard Charitable Foundation, provided matching funds for four of the five years. The first-year match came from Community Foundation discretionary funds. To keep abreast of efforts and issues affecting neighborhoods, Community Foundation staff participated in a Neighborhood Center Funders Group.

To review grant applications the Community Foundation executive director organized an advisory committee which included a member of the Community Foundation board, a member of its distribution committee, and a consultant who assisted the program in Years 2 and 3. In Year 5 the committee was enlarged to include the head of the Community Action Council, and a City Councilor from the Council's Community Development Committee.

Grantmaking procedures: An open Request for Proposals process was used. Program announcements were sent to 25 - 30 groups, and Community Foundation staff provided application assistance on request. Around 10 proposals typically were submitted. Applicants prepared summary sheets for each proposal, for Advisory

Committee review. Advisory Committee funding recommendations were forwarded to the distribution committee and Board for final awards decisions. The following "Guidelines for Application" were used:

1) Neighborhood groups should be working creatively on significant local issues and problems.

2) Neighborhood groups should provide evidence of a broad base of community support for their activities (for example, having an open membership that reflects the socio-economic and racial characteristics of the population in the neighborhood; and recognition of the group as a mouthpiece for the area).

3) Neighborhood groups should provide evidence of strong local leadership demonstrating internal consensus and accountability to the membership on decisionmaking (for example, having goals that reflect the concerns of the neighborhood, and having regular meetings of the Board of Directors).

4) Neighborhood groups should provide evidence of their ability to manage funds responsibly (at a minimum, providing an unaudited financial statement of past expenditures).

5) Neighborhood groups should demonstrate their ability to contribute in-kind services or volunteer labor.

6) Neighborhood groups should be working to establish cooperative efforts with other sectors of the community such as churches and businesses.

Five or six organizations were supported each year; continued funding was common for groups making progress. The grantmaking period was two to three months.

Technical assistance to neighborhood groups: Technical assistance was provided by the Community Foundation executive director in Years 1 and 2, a consultant engaged with support from the Stoddard Charitable Foundation in Year 3, and a new program officer with years of experience on the mayor's staff in Years 4 and 5.

Future of the program: A locally-funded five-year program extension, with some modifications, was planned. Modifications included an upfront commitment to three-year funding for each grantee; an explicit restriction against funding salaries, major equipment purchases or capital; and expansion of eligibility to middle- and upper-income neighborhoods with a hope of funding organizations in all five political districts in the city. Funding would come from the Community Foundation ($15,000 per year) and the Stoddard Foundation ($6,000 per year).

In addition, several neighborhood organizations funded during the Mott program were expected to "graduate" to the Community Foundation's discretionary grantmaking cycle.

APPENDIX ◆ B

A Partial List of Institutions Supportive of Low Income Neighborhood-Based Organizations

Community Foundations in the Mott Program

Arizona Community Foundation
Mr. Stephen D. Mittenthal, Executive Director
4350 East Camelback Road, Suite 216C
Phoenix, AZ 85018
602/952-9954

Foundation For The Carolinas
Mr. William L. Spencer, Executive Director
302 South Brevard Street
Charlotte, NC 28202
704/376-9541

The Dayton Foundation
Mr. Frederick Bartenstein, III, Director
Ms. Janet Henry, Program Officer
1895 Kettering Tower
Dayton, OH 45423
513/222-0410

Greater Kansas City Community Foundation
Ms. Janice C. Kreamer, President
Ms. Dalene D. Bradford, Vice President
406 Board of Trade Building
127 West 10th Street
Kansas City, MO 64105
816/842-0944

Community Foundation of New Jersey
Ms. Sheila C. Williamson, Executive Director
Ms. Barbara A. Gille, Program Officer
Box 317, Knox Hill Road
Morristown, NJ 07963
201/267-5533

Oregon Community Foundation
Mr. Gregory A. Chaille, Executive Director
Ms. Kathleen Cornett, Program Officer
1110 Yeon Building, 522 Southwest Fifth Avenue
Portland, OR 97204
503/227-6846

San Diego Community Foundation
Ms. Helen Monroe, Executive Director
Mr. Jeffrey A. Hale, Special Projects Administrator
525 "B" Street, Suite 410
San Diego, CA 92101
619/239-8815

Greater Worcester Community Foundation
Ms. Kay Marquet Seivard, Executive Director
44 Front Street, Suite 530
Worcester, MA 01608
508/755-0980

Resources to Community Foundations in the Mott Program

The following organizations provided assistance or information to one or more of the community foundations in the Mott program.

Center for Community Change
Mr. Andrew Mott
1000 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20007
202/342-0519

Training and consultation on organizing, organizational development, resource development, project design and management, policy research and advocacy.

Center for Urban and Public Affairs
Ms. Mary Ellen Mazey
Wright State University
Dayton, OH 45435
513/873-2941

Training and consultation on organizing, organizational development, resource development, project design and management, policy research and advocacy.

Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes
Ms. Lois Gibbs
P.O. Box 926
Arlington, VA 22216
703/276-7070

Training and consultation to citizens' groups working to prevent or repair hazardous waste problems. Founded by survivors of New York's Love Canal neighborhood.

Community Information Exchange
Ms. Alice Shabecoff
1029 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 710
Washington, DC 20005
202/628-2981

Extensive computerized database, monthly mailings, publications on wide range of neighborhood-related topics.

Community Training and Assistance Center
Mr. William Slotnik
105 Beach Street
Boston, MA 02111
617/423-1444

Training and consultation on organizing, organizational development, resource development, project design and management, policy research and advocacy.

Council for Community-Based Development
Mr. Talton Ray
127 East 28th Street
New York, NY 10016
212/545-0030

Research and advocacy for community-based housing and economic development.

Development Training Institute
Mr. Joseph McNeely
4806 Seton Drive
Baltimore, MD 21215
301/233-1010

Training and consultation on community-based housing and economic development.

Habitat for Humanity
Mr. Millard Fuller
Habitat and Church Streets
Americas, GA 31709
912/924-6935

Development of owner-occupied housing for low income families, using interest-free financing and donated labor by residents and other volunteers to keep costs down.

Institute for Cooperative Economics
Mr. Chuck Matthei
151 Montague City Road
Greenfield, MA 01301
413/774-7956

Training and consultation on community-based housing and economic development, especially cooperative enterprises.

Institute of Cultural Affairs
Mr. John Oyler
4220 North 25th Street
Phoenix, AZ 85016
602/955-4811

Training and consultation on organizing, organizational development, resource development, project design and management, policy research and advocacy.

Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance
Ms. Colleen McCarthy
616 West 26th Street
Kansas City, MO 64108
816/421-7070

Training and consultation on organizing, organizational development, resource development, project design and management, policy research and advocacy. Growing expertise in neighborhood-based housing development.

Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Mr. Sol Chafkin
2100 M. Street, NW, Suite 601
Washington, DC 20037
202/785-2908

Funding and technical assistance for community-based housing and economic development.

Mississippi Action for Community Education
Ms. Ruby Buck
121 South Harvey Street
Greenville, MS 38701
601/335-3523

Training and consultation on organizing, organizational development, resource development, project design and management, policy research and advocacy.

National Council of La Raza
Mr. Arnoldo Resendez
20 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202/628-9600

Training and consultation on organizing, organizational development, resource development, project design and management, policy research and advocacy.

National Congress for
Community Economic Development
Mr. Robert Zdenek
1612 K Street, NW, Suite 510
Washington, DC 20006
202/659-8411

Association for community development corporations.

National Low Income Housing Coalition
Mr. Barry Zigas
1012 14th Street, NW, Suite 106
Washington, DC 20005
202/662-1530

Information, research and advocacy on low income housing issues and federal housing policies and programs.

National Neighborhood Coalition
Mr. Bud Kanitz
810 First Street, NE, 3rd Floor
Washington, DC 20002
202/289-1551

Monthly newsletter on legislative, public policy and funding initiatives with calendar of events, publications listings and jobs listings.

National Training and Information Center
Mr. Shel Trapp
954 West Washington Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60607
312/243-3035

Training and consultation on organizing, organizational development, resource development, project design and management, policy research and advocacy. Special expertise in banking and reinvestment issues.

National Trust for Historic Preservation
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202/673-4047

Conferences, publications and consultation on wide range of topics related to neighborhood preservation and revitalization including housing and economic redevelopment, citizen participation and community organizing.

Neighborhoods USA
Ms. Anita Corwin
4643 Amesborough Road
Dayton, OH 45420
513/256-1384

Annual national conference with workshops on topics such as crime prevention, recycling, housing, and future trends. Recognition awards to successful neighborhood self-help efforts.

Partners for Livable Places
Mr. Robert McNulty
1429 21st Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202/887-5990

Newsletter, conferences and consultation on urban livability issues, especially on using livability amenities as economic development assets.

SRD/Neighborhood Development
Mr. Dean Lovelace
Ms. Marianne Gorczyca
University of Dayton
Dayton, OH 45469
513/229-4641

Training and consultation on organizing, organizational development, resource development, project design and management, policy research and advocacy.

Urban Institute
Ms. LaRita Green
Mr. Bill McCoy
University of North Carolina-Charlotte
Charlotte, NC 28223
704/597-2307

Training and consultation on organizing, organizational development, resource development, project design and management, policy research and advocacy. Special interest in individual leadership development.

The Youth Project
Ms. Lori Rubenstein
2335 18th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202/483-0030

Training and consultation on organizing, organizational development, resource development, project design and management, policy research and advocacy.